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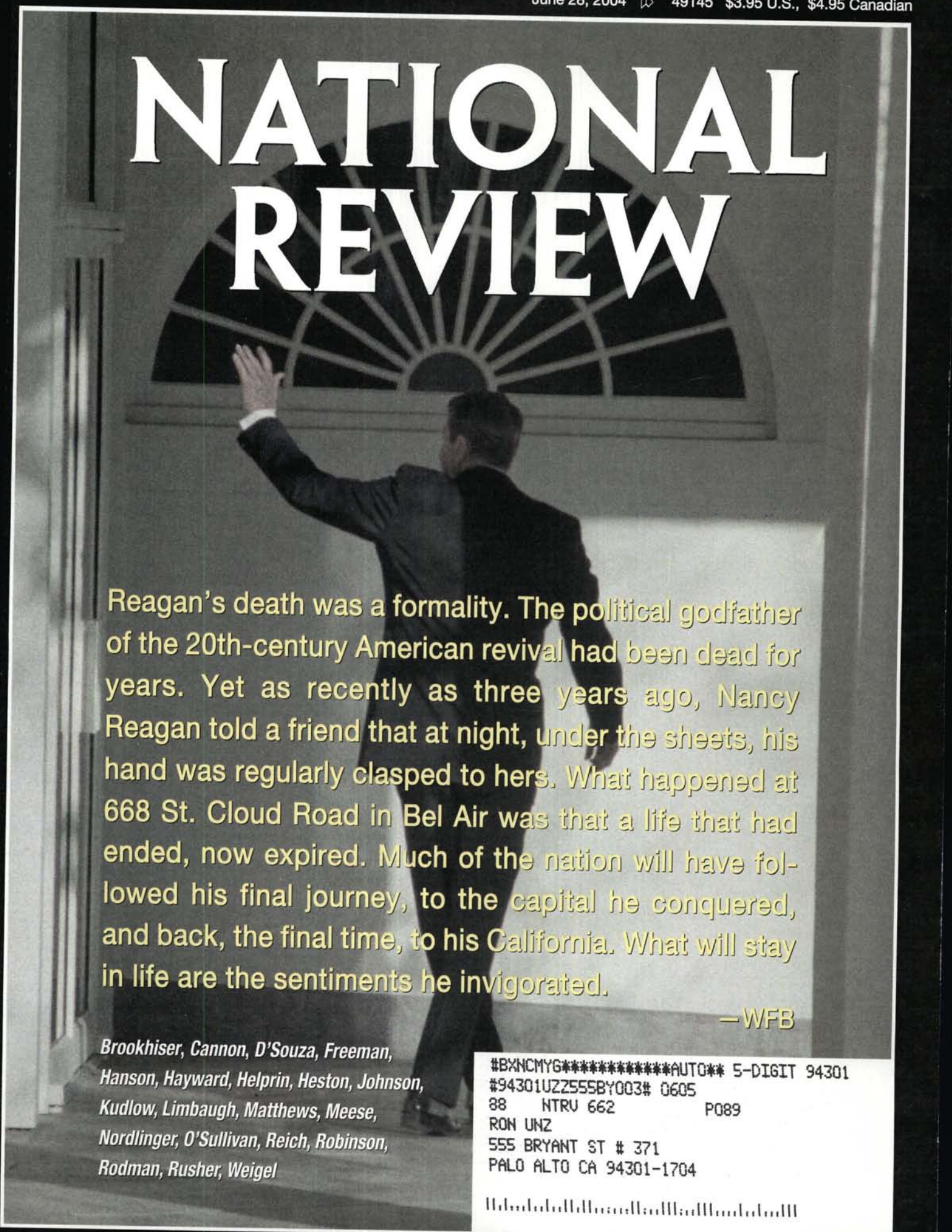

Reagan's death was a formality. The political godfather of the 20th-century American revival had been dead for years. Yet as recently as three years ago, Nancy Reagan told a friend that at night, under the sheets, his hand was regularly clasped to hers. What happened at 668 St. Cloud Road in Bel Air was that a life that had ended, now expired. Much of the nation will have followed his final journey, to the capital he conquered, and back, the final time, to his California. What will stay in life are the sentiments he invigorated.

—WFB

Brookhiser, Cannon, D'Souza, Freeman, Hanson, Hayward, Helprin, Heston, Johnson, Kudlow, Limbaugh, Matthews, Meese, Nordlinger, O'Sullivan, Reich, Robinson, Rodman, Rusher, Weigel

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for the record

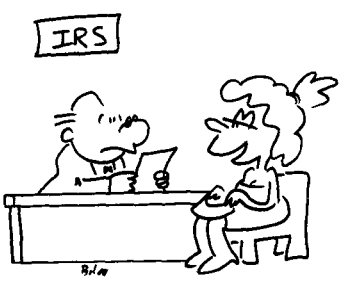
■ **Nancy Reagan**: "My family and I would like the world to know that President **Ronald Reagan** has passed away after ten years of Alzheimer's disease, at 93 years of age. We appreciate everyone's prayers over the years." . . . **Michael Reagan**: "I pray that as America reflects on the passing of my dad, they will remember a man of integrity, conviction, and good humor that changed America and the world for the better. He would modestly say the credit goes to others, but I believe the credit is his."

■ President **Bush**: "Ronald Reagan won America's respect with his greatness, and won its love with his goodness. He had the confidence that comes with conviction, the strength that comes with character, the grace that comes with humility, and the humor that comes with wisdom. He leaves behind a nation he restored and a world he helped save. During the years of President Reagan, America laid to rest an era of division and self-doubt. And because of his leadership, the world laid to rest an era of fear and tyranny. Now, in laying our leader to rest, we say thank you. He always told us that for America, the best was yet to come. We comfort ourselves in the knowledge that this is true for him, too. His work is done, and now a shining city awaits him. May God bless Ronald Reagan." . . . Former president **George H. W. Bush**: "He used the term 'evil empire' and all his critics were wringing their hands, saying he doesn't know how to conduct foreign affairs. . . . Sure enough, peace happened on his watch."

■ RNC chairman **Ed Gillespie**: "Because Ronald Reagan lived, people across the globe live in greater freedom and prosperity." . . . Secretary of state **Colin Powell**: "The world and his fellow Americans will forever be in his debt." . . . House majority leader **Tom DeLay:** "Ronald Reagan marshaled free men everywhere to their victory over Communist oppression. He led America out of weakness and malaise to heights of strength and prosperity never before witnessed by any nation in history." . . . Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** (R., Calif.): "It is easy to see how profoundly President Reagan changed the world. He made it safer, more free, and gave hope and opportunity to millions."

■ Sen. **Ted Kennedy** (D., Mass.): "On foreign policy, he will be honored as the president who won the Cold War." . . . Sen. **John Kerry** (D., Mass.): "Ronald Reagan's love of country was infectious. Even when he was breaking Democrats' hearts, he did so with a smile and in the spirit of honest and open debate." . . . Former president **Jimmy Carter**: "I probably know as well as anybody what a formidable communicator and campaigner President Reagan was. It was because of him that I was retired from my last job."

■ Former British prime minister **Margaret Thatcher**: "He will be missed not only by those who knew him and not only by the nation he served so proudly and loved so deeply, but also by millions of men and women who live in freedom today because of the policies he pursued. Ronald Reagan had a higher claim than any other leader to have won the Cold War politically, and he did it without a shot being fired." . . . Former Soviet leader **Mikhail Gorbachev**: "Reagan was a statesman who, despite all disagreements that existed between our countries at the time, displayed foresight and determination to meet our proposals halfway and change our relations for the better, stop the nuclear race, start scrapping nuclear weapons, and arrange normal relations between our countries."



"Oh, I know better than to try to fool a sexy guy like you."

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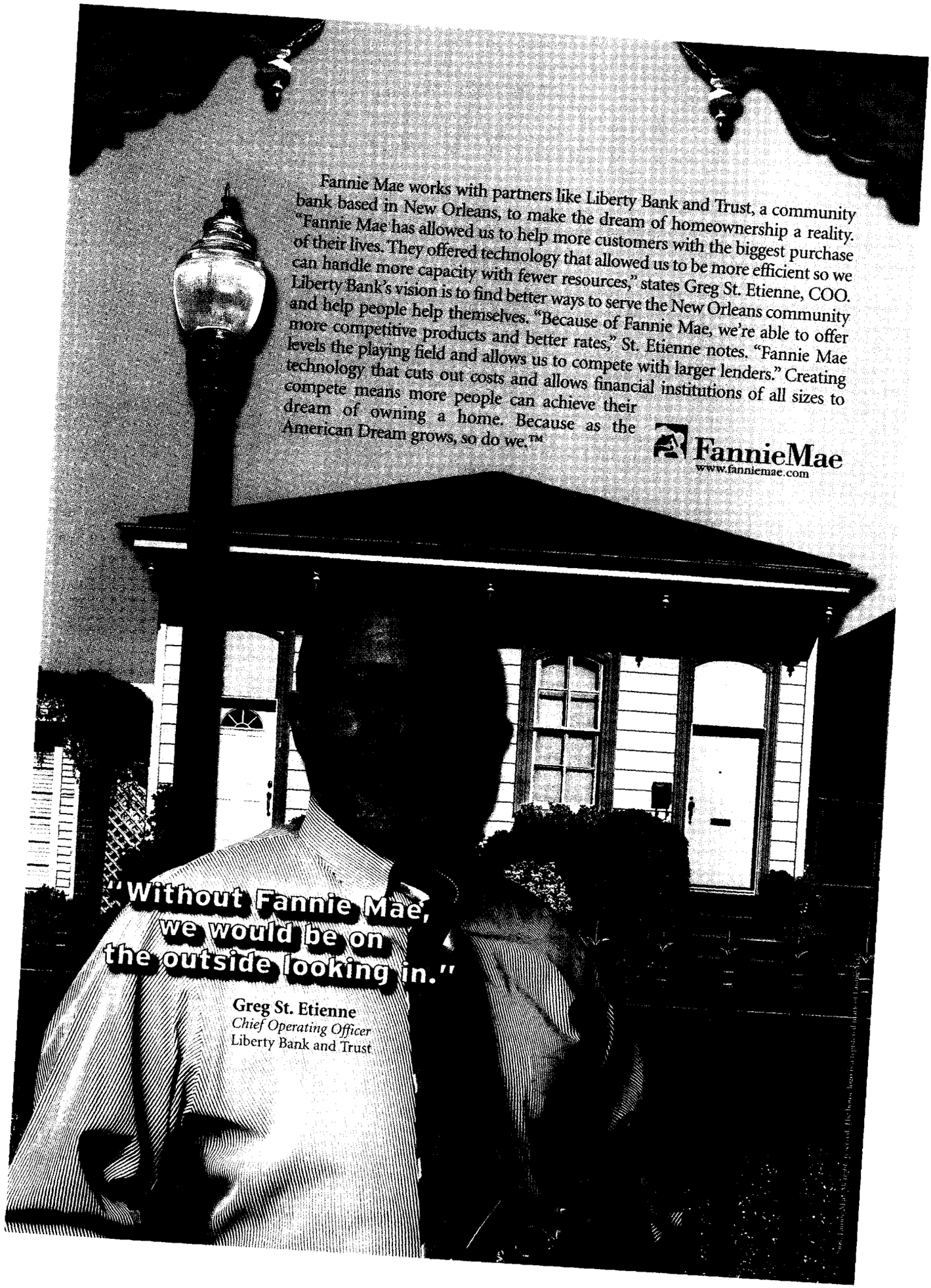

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THE WEEK

■ The federal government will close for President Reagan's funeral. One last win for the Gipper.

■ Sometimes a thing is said so well that it can be used again—and now, after a long time, used yet again. Boswell, who could do many things with words, turned to some words by William Gerard Hamilton to end his *Life of Johnson*, the greatest biography in English: "He has made a chasm, which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up.—Johnson is dead.—Let us go to the next best:—there is nobody; no man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson." We will substitute the name of Ronald Reagan. Like Boswell, we cannot compete with that.

■ Before President Reagan is completely encased in the amber of eulogy, let us remember that during his career he had many vocal enemies. The Left, and varying numbers of liberals, depending on their mental air pressure, thought him extreme, stupid, and senile; they blamed him for AIDS, and for bums on the street; they said he was a Dr. Strangelove. When he was shot in 1981, one public-radio announcer regretted that John Hinckley hadn't had a .45. When news of his death reached a march sponsored by ANSWER, the crowd whooped and cheered. The same waves wash at George W. Bush, a different man in a different time. Could the common provocation to their enemies be that Reagan and Bush are both defending America against its enemies?

■ Before Ronald Reagan announced his campaign for the 1976 presidential nomination—seeking to topple the détentist incumbent, Gerald Ford—NATIONAL REVIEW wrote editorially that his positions would be good, if they were "consistent with his well-known predilections." His predilections were well-known to us because we shared them. We said, time and again, as we said in 1975, that "Mr. Reagan is a man of honor, courage, and intelligence." When we opened our Washington office in 1983, President Reagan, who attended our reception, returned the compliment by calling us his "favorite magazine." Two years later, at our 30th-anniversary dinner in New York, Reagan predicted that "pundits and analysts" would one day "realize something, not only about this journal, but about its founder and editor," Bill Buckley: They "changed our country, indeed our century." *You* did that, sir. But NATIONAL REVIEW, its supporters and subscribers, its founder, and his successors and colleagues are honored to have helped.

■ John Kerry has molted again. Now that the Democratic primaries are over, he is sounding so hawkish that the Bush campaign is accusing him of becoming the "me-too" candidate. He has always been—it's just that now he is aping George Bush rather than Howard Dean. The four broad goals set out in his

ROMAN GENN

major national-security address are unobjectionable-sounding: leading "a new era of alliances"; modernizing the military; marshaling diplomatic, economic, and moral power, in addition to America's military might; and achieving energy independence. In the diplomatic arena, we are all in favor of alliances, but Kerry has been part of the establishment issuing knee-jerk pronouncements on the need to preserve old alliances at all costs, i.e., give an ill-intentioned France a veto over America's Iraq policy. Kerry and the Democrats have yet to realize that more separates France from the United States than Bush's cowboy mannerisms. When Kerry talks of renewing alliances, he really means apologizing for America's foreign policy over the last two years. No such apologies are necessary. There is room for criticism of Bush. His administration's public diplomacy has been horrid, and at times has reflected the dismissiveness of its most fervent supporters about alliances. As for modernizing the military, Don Rumsfeld has been pursuing that reform from his first day in office, and there's no reason to believe the Kerry team would be any better at it. Finally, energy independence 1) is not achievable, absent crushing restrictions on America's energy consumption; and 2) would do nothing to lessen the geopolitical importance of the Middle East, since the Saudis and others will be sitting on an important strategic resource whether we buy it or not. Watch this space: The only thing certain about John Kerry is more molting.

■ After several encouraging weeks in Iraq, the country has a new interim government. Bush critics have complained that the

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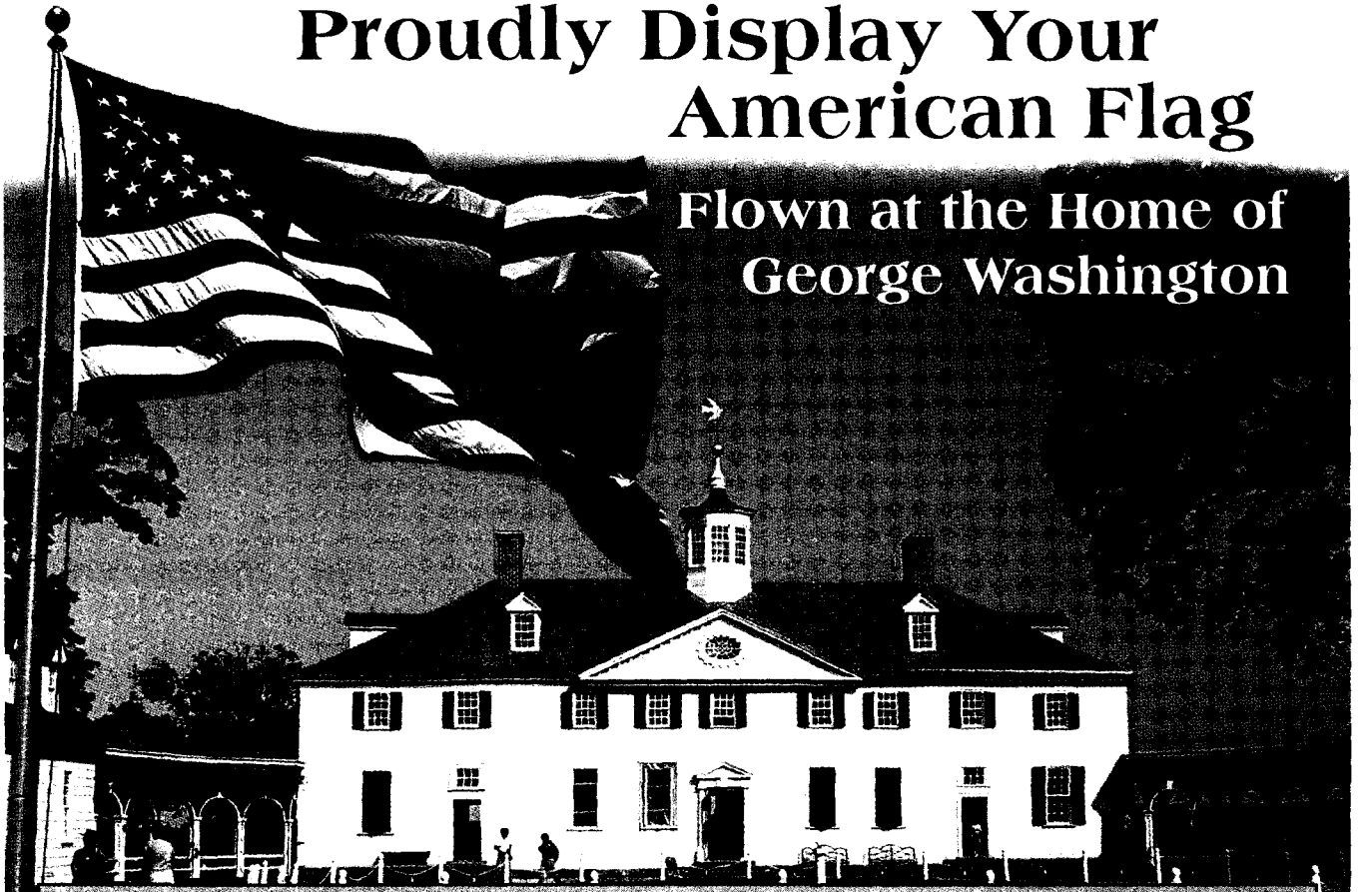

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THE WEEK...

Iraqi Governing Council crucially influenced the choices of U.N. representative Lakhdar Brahimi. But Iraqis taking control of their own destiny—isn't that what we all profess to be for? Then, the Governing Council dissolved itself. On what other recent occasion has anyone with power in the Middle East voluntarily relinquished it? Finally, the new government quite reasonably and responsibly said that it wants eventual control of its own security, but must in the meantime rely on the forces of the United States. These events took place against the backdrop of a deal in the south that had Moqtada al-Sadr giving up, in fits and starts, his insurrection, while the Fallujah deal continued to hold in the Sunni Triangle. Neither of these deals is perfect, but they have led to a welcome reduction of combat in the country. There are many hurdles still facing the U.S., perhaps most important among them the formation of a plausible Iraqi military and police force. There are still powerful forces in Iraq and the region that want to see the U.S. fail. But if this is an Iraqi policy that is a "disaster," as has been said so many times recently, success would be positively chiliastic.

■ George Tenet resigned, two years and nine months too late. Bush's loyalty to subordinates, including incompetents, is one of the marks against his presidency; a lesser example would be Norman Mineta, author of our dim-witted anti-profiling policies at airport security. Tenet did not see al-Qaeda coming as fast as it came; he understood no better than anyone else in the world the status of Saddam's WMD program. (Saddam wanted WMD and had violated numerous U.N. resolutions designed to constrain him; we had every reason, after 9/11, to move against him. But if Tenet had told his boss that Saddam's programs were faltering, or being broken up in anticipation of our attack, we could have avoided a world of confusion.) The truth about intelligence is that it is a human enterprise. We need to bribe, and break foreign laws. Until we lift the constraints that were put on the CIA in the 1970s, we will have one, two, many Tenets.

■ Proponents of expanded federal funding for research on human embryos are waging a slick p.r. campaign to change President Bush's policy. Many of the people involved in the campaign—parents of children with juvenile diabetes, for example, and Nancy Reagan—deserve our sympathy. But the campaign too often traffics in falsehoods. The more-funding lobby often claims that Bush promised funding for 78 embryonic stem-cell lines but has made only 19 available to researchers. A letter to Bush from 206 members of the House and 58 senators echoes this claim. But Bush said that these lines would be *eligible* for funding, not that they would be immediately available. It takes time for lines to become available, for technical and legal reasons unrelated to Bush's funding policy. As the process moves forward, the number of available lines will continue to rise, as it has been rising all year. Funding proponents are also exaggerating the curative potential of stem-cell research. Credible researchers, whatever their own views about the morality of destroying human embryos, are not raising the hopes of cancer patients or the children of people with Alzheimer's disease; pro-research activist groups are, cruelly. No scientist has reported that the funding restrictions are affecting his work. If science is a search for truth, this campaign is not advancing it.

■ *Time* reported it, and the *Washington Post* picked it up. In a study off the Oval Office, President Bush keeps a brick from the house of Mullah Omar, the former (and, one hopes, late) dictator of Afghanistan, and the pistol worn by Saddam Hussein, the former dictator of Iraq. This news brought croaking from the frog pool of Bush's critics—*cowboy, trophies*, you fill in the rest. But Bush does not mention these artifacts publicly (one of his guests revealed that he had them). He has them because soldiers in the field sent them to him, as mementoes of their achievements. May Bush look at them as markers of what we have done, and as reminders of what remains to be done. And we cannot resist: What Bill Clinton had in the little study was Monica Lewinsky.

■ Evidence continues to mount that Iran, despite repeated denials and obfuscations, is developing nuclear weapons. The June report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) documents, among other things, Tehran's uranium-conversion activities and pursuit of advanced centrifuges. It also raises explicit doubts about the veracity of some of Tehran's previous claims, such as its insistence that traces of weapons-grade uranium found on centrifuge parts had originated in Pakistan (and not, say, in Iran itself). But even more newsworthy than what the report says is the fact that an international agency has finally come around to saying it. Over European resistance but with strong support from Australia and Canada, the U.S. has continued to push the IAEA—or, as some might say, drag it kicking and screaming—to confront Iran with its deceptions and continue digging. Though there is more work to be done, Tehran's activities have now been exposed to an extent difficult to ignore. For that the Bush administration deserves more credit than it has so far received.

■ The 15th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre was greeted with utter silence from the Chinese media. That nation's Communist rulers have done their utmost to flush the events of June 1989 down the memory hole, prohibiting any public discussion whatsoever. In Tiananmen Square itself, a handful of

I REMEMBER REAGAN

They're sullen now, those critics who
Peer from their spider holes,
While all around (even the French)
Fly flags half-mast from poles.
They called him "cowboy"—ring a bell?—
And when he KO'd Fritz,
Declining to attack his youth,
For libs, it was the pits.

—W. H. VON DREELE

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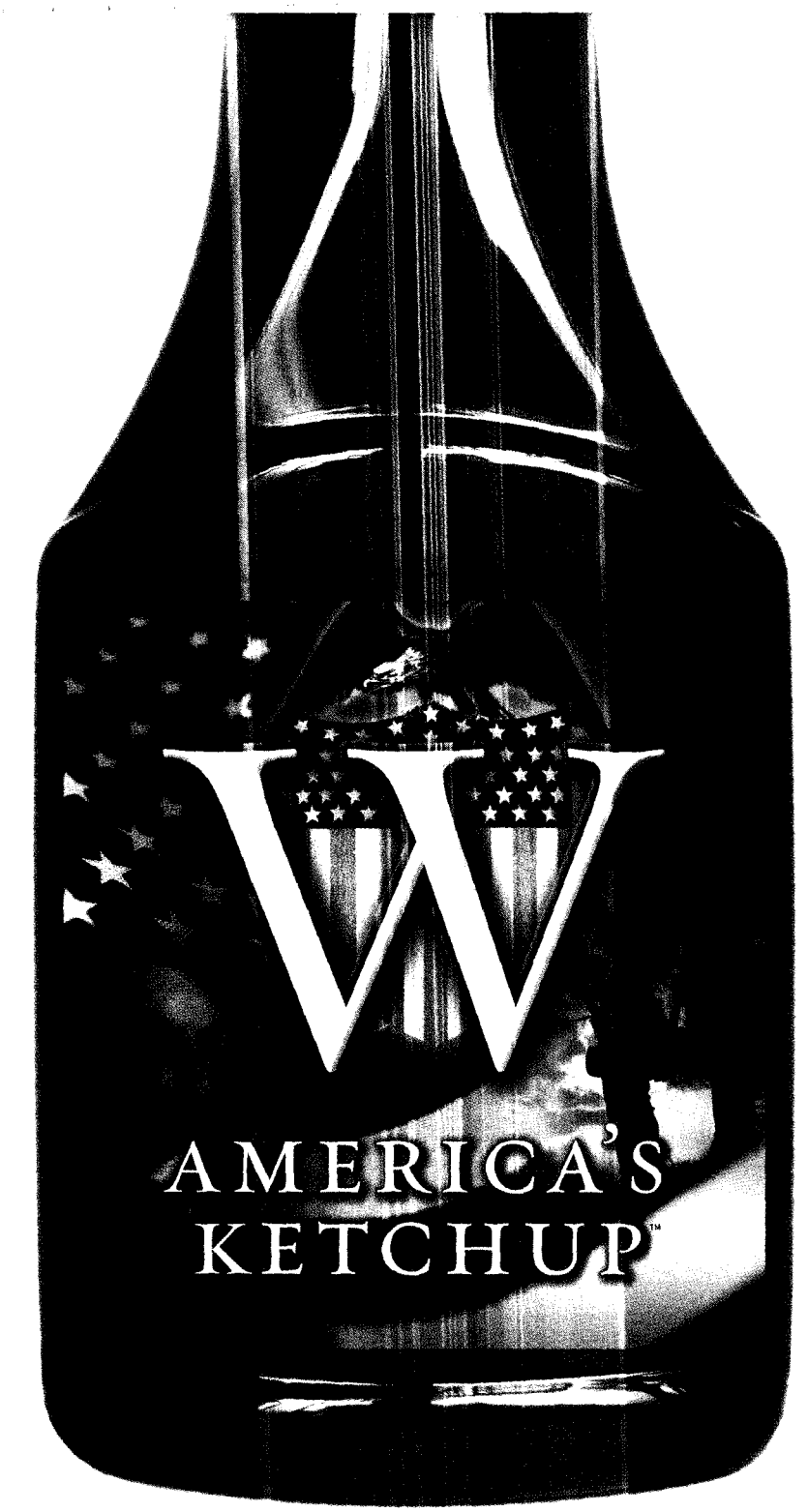

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THE WEEK...

middle-aged people attempting to protest—including one in a wheelchair—were pounced on by police and hustled away in vans. Security was also tight on college campuses. Former party chief Zhao Ziyang, who showed some signs of sympathizing with the protesters at the time, entered his 16th year under house arrest. Scores of protesters are still in jail and labor camps. While China's economy careens ahead, her political life remains stuck deep in an ice age. Only in Hong Kong was there any public commemoration of the massacre, with some 80,000 people attending a nighttime rally in a city park. Even this, though, may have been the last guttering flicker of political vitality in the former British colony, on which Beijing's icy grip has been perceptibly tightening. We must hope that one day the brave patriots of June 4th will be properly remembered all across their homeland; but it is hard to believe that day will come soon.

■ Some aged men will come back to Normandy in 2014. But this was the last centennial commemoration of D-Day that will attract large numbers of veterans. What Lincoln called "the silent artillery of time" will accomplish what the Germans failed to do, wiping out all the brave men who began the liberation of a continent. Time passes, and the Cold War that succeeded the Second World War has been succeeded by the Terror War; allies change and fall away. We are responsible for the tests that come to us. History, the custodian of memory, will never forget how the men of 1944 met theirs.

■ "Long choosing, and beginning late," said Milton of *Paradise Lost*. The same might be said of the World War Two Veterans Memorial on the Mall in Washington. For the memorial, the present was almost too late. More than 1,000 veterans of WWII are now dying every day, and that rate is increasing. The design, won in competition by Friedrich St. Florian, is a mixture of vaguely classical columns, a pool of water, and assorted symbols of WWII. It has been criticized as uncreative, contradictory, a potpourri of objects, and unworthy of its location. In the unkindest cut of all, it has been declared reminiscent of the pseudoclassical architecture of the enemy, such as that of Albert Speer, a war criminal and Hitler's favorite architect. Very damaging judgments? It might be wiser to withhold judgment for a while. The whole, after all, is welcoming, perhaps a theme in itself. Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial, thought to be an outrage at the beginning, now is felt to be severe but dignified, expressive, its black marble reflecting national monuments, and a triumph of taste as well as a tourist favorite. At least a generation is required, really, to evaluate a work of art. The Chrysler Building in New York was once held to be a modernist marvel. Now its Art Deco has the charm of pastness, like an old Victrola. Everyone will agree on gratitude for the efforts of Bob Dole and other veterans to push this monument through a Kafkaesque maze of difficulties.

■ Gertrude Himmelfarb once wrote that she judged all historians by their opinion of Winston Churchill: Did they recognize that, no matter how many faults came to light, he remained simply a great man? One such historian was William Manchester. He was a New Deal liberal, overly infatuated with John F. Kennedy, though he came to see the vicious side of the Kennedys when they disapproved of his copious account of the events of Dallas. Later he expressed dismay with the course of modern liberalism, writing a spirited attack on egalitarianism for NATIONAL REVIEW. Manchester's repugnance for egalitarianism grew out of his admiration for human greatness, which inspired him to write his exceptional biographies of Douglas MacArthur and, later, Winston Churchill, a project that, sadly, was unfinished at the time of his death on June 1. Manchester got several large and small things about Churchill wrong, but these errors were outweighed by the magisterial style he brought to the subject, and his remain the best Churchill biographies to read. He would have been a worthy biographer for Ronald Reagan. In an era of historical writing degraded with narrow specialization and crude reductionism, Manchester's grand narrative style was inspiring. R.I.P.

■ The issue comes round periodically: Should the National Anthem be changed, or perhaps transposed from its official key of B-flat to G, to make it more singable? (In B-flat, *glare* and *free* land on bass- and alto-punishing *f*'s; the key of G would make them *d*'s.) The tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner" was an 18th-century drinking song, "To Anacreon in Heaven," so people, presumably not in prime voice, had no trouble negotiating it. What about the key? It is hard; most people at ball games take those high phrases down an octave, or mumble. But, as with every great song, we must consider music and words together. "The Star-Spangled Banner" is about a doubtful battle, the siege of Ft. McHenry, in one of our most badly fought wars, the War of 1812. The first stanza ends in a question: Does the flag still wave? Has bravery defended freedom? There is nothing easy about "The Star-Spangled Banner"; it is a song of hope and difficulty. For the first time since the War of 1812, our mainland has been attacked. Keep it in B-flat.

■ A two-year-old African American boy in Beaverton, Ore., was beaten to death by his father. At autopsy the infant was found to have a brain injury, a broken neck, broken ribs, and whip marks on his body. The father's lawyer has a theory to explain his actions: post-traumatic slave syndrome. Credit for the discovery of this hitherto-unacknowledged disorder goes to Joy DeGruy-Leary, a professor of social work at a nearby university. Because black Americans have never been treated for the sufferings and humiliations endured by their ancestors, they are susceptible to "multigenerational trauma," leading to "self-destructive, violent, or aggressive behavior," explains the professor. We applaud the lawyer's ingenuity—it is, after all, his business to think up some kind of excuse for his client's horrible deeds—but does America, let alone black America, really need yet another way to deny the moral autonomy of the individual human soul?

■ Oh dear, we knew it would come to this—what with the whole same-sex-marriage thing—but so soon? In New Zealand, Professor Peter Munz, a historian at Wellington's Victoria University, has recommended to the country's parliament that incest between (among?) consenting adults be legalized. In the past, averred Prof. Munz, incest was considered a travesty only

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Where Else Can They Go?

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Now that we are gearing up for another presidential campaign, we should clear the air of one common misconception, namely, that the so-called median voter theorem tells the whole story by saying that candidates from the left and the right will gravitate toward the middle. This prediction rests on two basic propositions. The first is that voter sentiments, to the extent that they can be aligned on a single axis, take a bell-shaped form, with most voters concentrated in the middle. The second is that all voters, no matter where they are located in this one-dimensional space, will gravitate toward the candidate whose views are closest to their own. Given these two assumptions, each candidate in a two-person general election has an incentive to move from the middle of the distribution of his own party to the middle of the distribution of the electorate. In principle, that movement should continue until the two candidates just about touch each other.

The reason candidates migrate to the center is captured in the expression, where else can they go? Thus the voters on the right and left of the spectrum will dutifully stay with their candidate even as he marches toward the center. No matter how far the candidate strays, the unhappy voters at the edges will still vote their interest.

There is of course an undoubted kernel of truth in this analysis, for it helps explain some of the dizzying contradictions in electoral politics as candidates artlessly recalibrate their positions from the primary to the general election. But it is equally evident that this brief account does not tell the whole story, even if we grant the truth of its assumptions. Move as they may, the candidates on both sides still retain distinctive personas throughout the campaign. **What forces prevent perfect compression toward the median voter?**

The conceptual mistake in the standard analysis assumes that each voter has only a dichotomous choice between two candidates, so that the *intensity* of preference, as measured by the political distance between the preferred candidate and the voter, simply does not matter. That might be true in a world in which citizens only vote. But potential voters also supply financial support, free labor, and vocal support for their candidates. These critical elements significantly depend on the level of affection that any candidate for electoral office retains with her or his original base. If the disillusioned in the ranks even bother to vote for their candidate of choice, they may sit on their hands when it comes to funding, work, and advocacy. That lack of commitment could reduce resources and easily spell the difference between victory and defeat in a close election.

Obviously more is at work. Even so, just this one complication of the median voter theorem helps explains why politicians of all persuasions work desperately to be all things to all people. It is much easier to write about election campaigns than to run them.

—Richard A. Epstein

Richard A. Epstein is the Peter and Kirsten Bedford Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the James Parker Hall Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago.

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THE WEEK...

because "nubile women" would be wasted on "local people" unless they were married off into other tribes. But women are no longer needed for dynastic and trade alliances, and today, he concludes, "if siblings—against all odds—should fall in love with each other, they should be welcome to it." A beautiful sentiment, and one so nicely attuned to the elevation of consent to the pinnacle of sexual ethics. As for Prof. Munz, whose proposal was almost instantly rejected by the Law and Order Committee, he's shocked "to think that our laws are in the hands of people [so] disinterested and ignorant." We think he means that they are "uninterested" in incest, and we certainly hope so.

CONSERVATISM

Reagan for Today

SUCCESS tends to end controversy. After we won the Cold War, we discovered that everyone had been an anti-Communist. If almost everyone could join in the celebration of Ronald Reagan's life occasioned by his death, it is because many of the specific issues that animated his political career—the Soviet Union, inflation, confiscatory rates of marginal taxation—are no longer issues; and they are no longer issues because Reagan won.

It is not, of course, true that we are all Reaganauts now. Conservatives feel Reagan's loss more keenly. He was one of ours: the first, so far the only, president drawn from conservative-movement ranks. And while Reagan's program of 1980 and 1981 is out of date, the principles that inspired it are not. Conservatives can still learn from his example.

The lesson we should take is not the one that has been most often drawn in the days since his death: that we should at all times be genial, optimistic, and sunny. Reagan's remarkable courtesy and lack of bitterness even when provoked are indeed worthy of emulation. But we should not forget that Reagan could be stern. He never shrank from tough moral judgments, as in his condemnation of the evil empire and opposition to abortion even in cases of rape and incest. He was ruthless in sacking aides, far more so than the "compassionate conservative" now in office. He never denied that America had prospects to fear. He warned that it faced continued stagnation and weakness if it re-elected Jimmy Carter. What he affirmed was that we had the freedom to act against those fears. His virtue was not "optimism," but courage, albeit a courage rooted in confidence about American principles and about Providence.

Thanks to his leadership, the emphasis of American conservatism shifted in the 1980s from the dangers of action to the opportunities of freedom. Americans did not have to accept mutual assured destruction and coexistence with the Soviet Union. Republicans did not have to accept the inexorable growth of the central government and find ways to pay for it. This was the ideological content of Reagan's much-remarked hope: why he could promise morning in America rather than a long twilight struggle.

But Reagan was no mere ideologue. For one thing, his view of liberty was more complex than out-of-context snippets from his speeches would suggest. The same president who famously said that "government is the problem, not the solution" also said that the state was a desirable "form of moral order." The fact that public faith in the government rose under Reagan is sometimes said to be ironic. But Reagan wanted a government that was competent in the attainment of its legitimate ends. For another thing, Reagan was a conservative statesman. His program was suited to the circumstances he found. He set priorities, which meant that lower priorities were sacrificed. He correctly judged it more important to win the Cold War than to shrink the state. Conservatives correctly judged his successes more important than his disappointments and defeats.

It is also instructive that Reagan spoke more often about the Founders than did his nine predecessors combined. Leading a conservatism that included, then as now, many factions and tensions, Reagan united it around a cause that was simple enough to be compelling and complex enough to contain many truths: the recovery of the political inheritance bequeathed us by the Founders. Reagan, the forward-looking optimist of fable, gave his last Oval Office address on the erasure of American historical memory. He did his part to prevent that erasure, and now has become part of that memory: one last swimmer brought back to shore.

ABORTION

Public Health

PHYLLIS HAMILTON, a federal judge in San Francisco, permanently enjoined the enforcement of the ban on partial-birth abortion against abortion-clinic operator Planned Parenthood. The decision is not a surprise, given Supreme Court precedents, but it is still illuminating. What it reveals is just how extreme—in its distance from the Constitution, public sentiment, and justice—our abortion jurisprudence has become.

In *Roe* v. *Wade*, on the basis of nothing in the text, history, or structure of the Constitution, the Supreme Court found a right to abortion. *Roe* allowed regulation of late-term abortions, so long as these regulations did not threaten the health of pregnant women, with health defined broadly to include psychological health. In its 2000 decision on partial-birth abortion, the Supreme Court expanded this "health exception." The Court would not only strike down restrictions on abortion when abortion was necessary to protect a mother's expansively defined health. It would also strike them down when a restricted type of abortion is safer than other types of abortion. In other words, the right to have a dead baby at any stage of pregnancy is absolute, and includes the right to accomplish this end in the safest manner possible.

Judge Hamilton's decision builds on that jurisprudence. To strike down an abortion regulation, now it is only necessary for a few abortionists to decide that a method of abortion—however disfavored by their colleagues—is safer for the mother. Hamilton argues that expert witnesses who disapprove of partial-birth abortion cannot be trusted to judge its necessity.

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Colosseum, Rome, Italy.

A Great Teacher

Garrett G. Fagan is associate professor of history at Pennsylvania State University. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Trinity College, Dublin, and was a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia.

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Abortionists who practice partial-birth abortion are, on the other hand, experts to whom judges should listen. It is as though a judge were to decide whether capital punishment is fairly applied by listening only to executioners, and to exclude opponents of execution from the start. On Judge Hamilton's argument, it is hard to see how legislatures can enact laws against infanticide. Some abortionists will be found who believe that the right to a dead baby can be most safely vindicated by fully delivering the baby and then dismembering it. (Or, to use the judge's favored term, "disarticulating" it.)

When federal courts assert powers that the Constitution does not give them, they violate the Constitution. Congress and the president should respond by treating their decisions as unconstitutional: binding on the parties to the case, but not binding on the political branches of government as constitutional actors. They should limit the courts' jurisdiction to issues less likely to occasion judicial abuse of the Constitution. The political branches have, sadly, become accustomed to judicial rule. If ever there were a case that cries out for legislative rebuke to the courts, this is it.

notes & asides

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: While researching for an article on the 60th anniversary of D-Day, I came across this item buried on page 364 in Stephen E. Ambrose's book *D-Day*. It relates to Cpl. George Ryan, a gunner on a 105mm howitzer with the 1st Infantry Division, who landed at Omaha Beach early on D-Day:

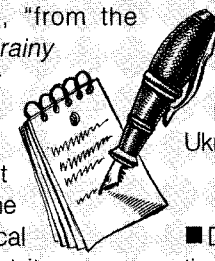
> Ryan made it to the seawall. He threw himself down beside a 16th Regiment infantryman. "You got a cigarette?" Ryan asked.
>
> A bit later, a piece of shrapnel made a scratch on Ryan's hand. Nothing much, "almost like a cat would give you." Soon a medical officer came along. He said, "Every man on this beach deserves the Purple Heart, just for being here. Give me your names, fellows. If you are wounded I can take care of you. If you are dead, I can't. If there's nothing wrong with you, I can see that you get the Purple Heart anyway."
>
> "How about this, Major?" Ryan asked, showing his scratch. The doctor said he would get him the medal. But Ryan thought, "No, I can't do this. It would cheapen it so much. A guy loses a leg and gets the Purple Heart; I get it for a scratch; that just ain't fair. I turned it down."

Does this bring anyone to mind?

Sincerely,
Richard M. Long
Worthington, Ohio

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: I wish to thank Linda Bridges for her enlightening comments on my contribution to what seems to have become an ongoing trivial pursuit as to whether it's okay to say "the Ukraine" as opposed to just "Ukraine" (Notes & Asides, May 17). If I may make just a few brief points:

First, I would be among the first to agree that logic has little to do with idiomatic convention. (Incidentally, I dispute that the "U" of "Ukraine" indicates the notion "on." It may have originally meant that, but if it did today, then "in the Ukraine" would be *na Kraine*, not *na Ukraine*, which is what people actually say. Likewise, "from the Ukraine" would be *iz Krainy* rather than *iz Ukrainy*. But enough of that.) My point though, which I fear may have been lost, was not that we should all say "the Ukraine" because it's logical to do so, but simply that it should be okay to say "the Ukraine" without being labeled a solecist. My main appeal is to the idiomatic convention of which Ms. Bridges speaks, meaning that if enough people decide that something should be said a certain way, then eventually that will determine its "correctness," regardless of anyone's feelings—just as the plural pronoun *their* seems to have become a PC singular one over my objections. My ultimate appeal, however, is to my *American Heritage Dictionary*, which defines Ukrainian as "an inhabitant or native of the Ukraine." So there.



Actually, Ms. Bridges's most cogent argument against "the Ukraine," as far as I'm concerned, is her remark that Ukrainians themselves have objected at certain times to the use of "the" regarding their country's name. If I were to meet such a person, I would of course defer to their (or his or her) sensibilities. Nor would I presume to correct their use of the double negative in their language, simply because Samuel Johnson, or some other harmless drudge, did away with it in mine.

Yours faithfully,
Patrick M. Dempsey
Granada Hills, Calif.

Dear Mr. Dempsey: *Some* other *harmless drudge*? Sir, you can have the Ukraine, but not the great Johnson. We'll just forget you said that. The paper on which the words are printed will disintegrate and fall away 24 hours after you see this; time enough to repent, and to travel round trip to the Ukraine.

Yours, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: At the risk of derivative maundering, and with any apology due Don Vollmar of Oakedale, Calif. (Notes & Asides, May 3), I deliver myself of this charge:

Loath to stir a furor
Mispronouncing "err," or
Wretched misdemeanor
Uttering error, as "err-or"
I withhold my what for
That air, unerring, roar
Heir apparent, *nil pejor*.

To air is divine.

Sincerely,
Richard Stott
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Mr. Stott: Nice going! That's Ur-advice.

Cordially,

—WFB

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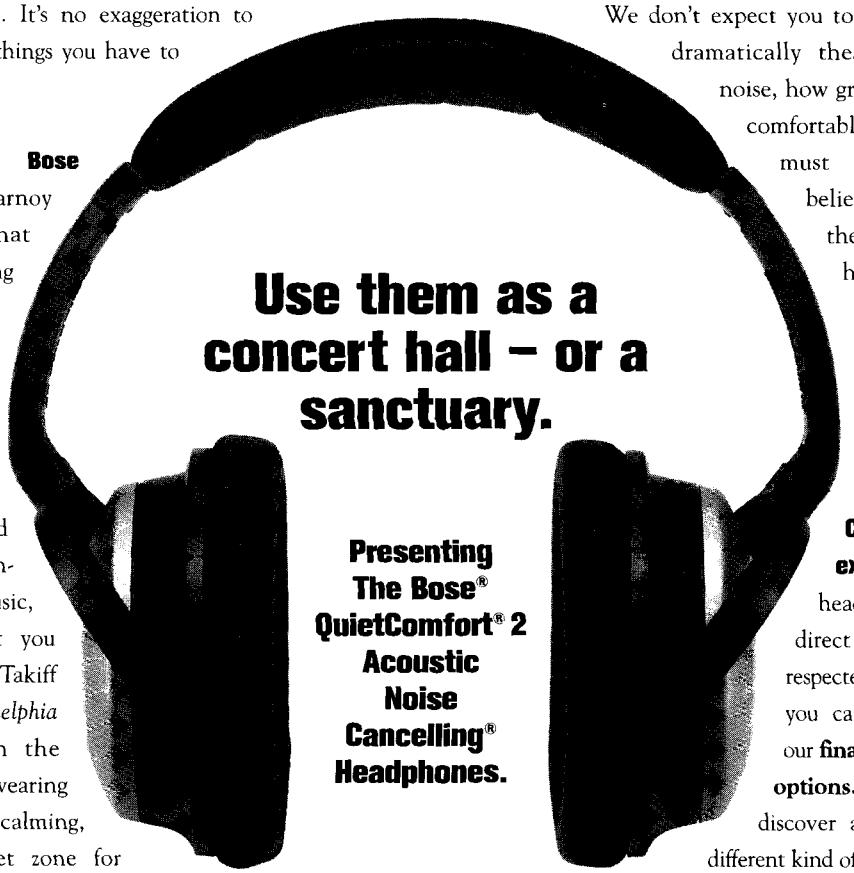

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RONALD REAGAN
1911–2004

Sunday, June 6
Memo to: Richard Lowry
From: WFB

As you are aware, I knew President Reagan well and we were in close touch during his active years. I think it appropriate to reproduce, in this memorial issue of the magazine he honored, and on whose board of directors he served, excerpts from two essays more or less commissioned by the Reagan family.

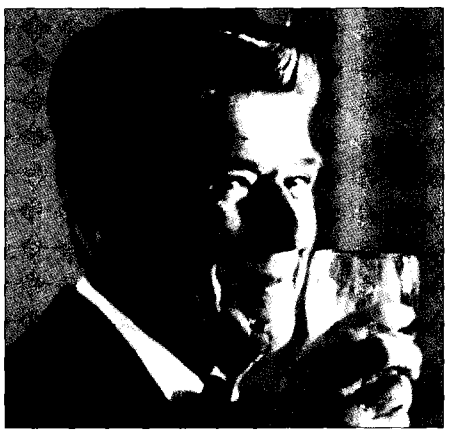
The first of these is an address delivered at the celebration of his 88th birthday at the Reagan Library. That speech gave the reasons why this magazine cherished that man. It also tells the story of a personal friendship.

A year later I was asked to write an introduction to a volume entitled *Ronald Reagan: An American Hero*. This essay celebrates an extraordinary life, extraordinarily recorded.

On February 4 and 5, 1999, the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Center for Public Affairs sponsored a two-day symposium at the Ronald Reagan Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. The theme of the event was "Eight Years That Changed the World: The Reagan Legacy in the New Century." Mark Burson, executive director of the Reagan Center, opened the meeting. Speakers and panelists were: Brian Mulroney, Martin Anderson, Sander Vanocur, Edwin Meese, Murray Weidenbaum, Dinesh D'Souza, Stephen Entin, James Miller, Clark Judge, Larry Arnn, Richard McKenzie, William Niskanen, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Maureen Reagan, Ken Adelman, Dick Allen, Howard Baker, Jack Kemp, Peter Robinson, Robert Bartley, Ed Feulner, Michael Novak—and Mrs. Reagan.

The keynote speaker was William F. Buckley Jr. Here is an excerpt from Mark Burson's introduction: "With the establishment of National Review, *Buckley gave to conservatism what it previously lacked: intellectual firepower, sophisticated and literate reasoning, and, yes, even a sense of humor. These are the weapons with which the long, twilight struggle with liberalism has been waged; along the way, they have attracted more than a few converts to the root message. And we know that one of the proud Americans who came over was a popular movie actor, television personality, and former Democrat who also did a few things in politics.*

"Mr. Buckley:



Ronald Reagan, An American Hero, *page 182*

The Keynote Address

BY WFB

I RECALL that Henry Mencken described an introduction to him on a celebratory occasion as having evoked "a full moon, the setting sun, and the aurora borealis." In this perspective, if all the things Mark Burson has said really belong to me, how am I expected even to intimate the achievements of Ronald Reagan? Well, I can do that, really, in one sentence.

He succeeded in getting Nancy Reagan to marry him.

The country is familiar with the legend of Nancy, familiar with her accomplishments as companion, aide, monitor, wife, and lover. There was never anyone who more devotedly served a husband. She has renewed for us all the meaning of the pledge to stand by in sickness and in health.

This being a convocation of friends and admirers, in celebration of his birthday, I propose as keynoter to dwell a while on a longtime friendship. It began in the spring of 1961. Ronald and Nancy Reagan, whom I hadn't met, were seated at one end of the restaurant, my sister-in-law and I at the other end. We were out of sight of one another. Both parties were headed, after dinner, across the street to an auditorium in a public high school. There I would be introduced as the evening's speaker addressing an assembly of doctors and their wives, by Ronald Reagan, a well-known actor and currently the host of a television series sponsored by General Electric; moreover, a public figure who had taken an interest in conservatives and conservative writings.

We bumped into each other going out the door. Ronald Reagan introduced himself and Nancy, and said he had just finished reading my book *Up from Liberalism*. He quoted a crack from it, done at the expense of Mrs. Roosevelt, which he relished. I requited his courtesy by relishing him and Nancy for life.

He distinguished himself that night—and dismayed Mrs. Reagan—by what he proceeded to do after discovering that the microphone hadn't been turned on. He had tried, raising his voice, to tell a few stories. But the audience was progressively impatient. Waiting in vain for the superintendent to unlock the

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Arabian Fables (II)

More fanciful Arab myths to sway world opinion.

Earlier this year, we published our message, "Arabian Fables (I)," in which we made clear how the Arab propaganda machine creates myths and lies with which to misinform the world. We discussed the myths of the "Palestinians"and of the "West Bank" and the mythical concept of "occupied territories". In today's message, we shall address three more of these myths.

What are some of these myths?

Jerusalem ("Arab East Jerusalem"). The Arabs have assiduously propagated the myths that Jerusalem is an Arab capital, that (after Mecca and Medina) Jerusalem is their third holy city, and that it is intolerable to them that infidels (Jews) are in possession of it.

The reality of course is that Jerusalem was never an Arab capital and that it was, until the Jews revitalized it, a dusty provincial city that hardly played any economic, social, or political role. Jerusalem is mentioned hundreds of times in the Jewish Bible and has been the center of the Jewish faith and the focus of Jewish longing ever since the Romans destroyed the Temple in the early years of the first millennium. Not once is Jerusalem mentioned in the Koran.

> "The Arab propaganda machine has created myths that have been accepted by much of the world. No peace in the Middle East is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are!"

As to "East Jerusalem": There is East Saint Louis, there is East Hampton, and there used to be East Berlin, but, until the Arab propaganda machine created the concept, there was never in history an "East Jerusalem", let alone an "Arab East Jerusalem".

The eastern part of Jerusalem is now predominantly inhabited by Arabs, though their proportion is decreasing. But what is the reason for this? It is because the Jordanians destroyed all traces of Jewish presence from the eastern part of the city and drove all the Jews out during the 19 years (between 1948 and 1967) in which they were in occupation of the eastern part of the city. The world, informed by Arab propaganda, considers those Jews who wish to return to the eastern part of the city to be troublemakers or worse.

The concept of Jerusalem being a holy Arab city and the capital of whatever political entity the "Palestinians" may eventually form is a myth and so of course is the concept of "Arab East Jerusalem".

"Settlements." When Jordan came into possession of Judea/Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem, following the invasion of the newly-formed Jewish state, and stayed in occupation for 19 years, it systematically obliterated all Jewish villages in the area under their occupation, drove out the Jewish inhabitants, and left the area "judenrein" (free of Jews)—the first time that concept had been applied since the Nazis created it during their short and bloody reign in Germany. When the Israelis recovered these territories, they rebuilt these villages, created new ones, and built new towns and suburbs to existing cities, especially Jerusalem.

The Arabs decided to call these towns and villages "settlements", with their connotation of illegitimacy and impermanence. The world, including the United States, is much agitated over these population centers and, goaded by the Arabs, declares them to be impediments to peace. What nonsense! Nobody considers the tens of thousands of Arabs who continue to stream to these territories as impediments to peace.

The term "settlements", too, is a propaganda myth created by the Arabs.

"Refugees." In 1948, when six Arab armies invaded the Jewish state in order to destroy it on the very day of its birth, broadcasts by the advancing Arab armies appealed to the resident Arabs to leave their homes so as not to be in the way of the invaders. As soon as the "quick victory" was won, they could return to their homes and would also enjoy the loot from the Jews, who would have been driven into the sea. It didn't turn out quite that way. Those Arabs who, despite the urgings of the Jews to stay and to remain calm, foolishly left, became refugees. Those who decided not to yield to those blandishments are now, and have been for over 50 years, citizens of Israel, with all the same rights and privileges as their Jewish fellows.

But what happened to those refugees—by best estimates about 600,000 of them? Did their "Arab brethren" allow them to settle in their countries, to work, and to become productive citizens and useful members of their societies? No! They kept and still keep them, their children, their grandchildren, and in some cases even their great-grandchildren, in miserable "refugee camps", so that they can be used as political and military pawns in order to keep the burning hatred against Israel alive and in order to supply the manpower for the unremitting fight against Israel.

During those more than fifty years, Israel has taken in more than three million Jewish immigrants from all parts of the world and has integrated them productively into its society. According to the "Palestinians", the Arab "refugees" have now marvelously increased to five million (!). It is the intent and fervent desire of the Arabs that all of them should return to Israel so as to destroy the country without the necessity of war.

The "refugees" are a red herring and another myth created by the Arab propaganda machine.

The Arab propaganda machine, aided by the most high-powered public relations firms in the United States and all over, has created myths that, by dint of constant repetition, have been accepted as truth by much of the world. No sensible discussion, no peace in the Middle East, is possible until those Arab myths have been exposed for what they are.

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door to the tight little office at the other end of the hall, in which the control box lay, he sized up the problem and, having surveyed all possible avenues of approach, climbed out the window at stage level and, one story above the busy traffic below, cat-walked, Cary Grant style, twenty or thirty yards to the window of the control room. This he penetrated by breaking the window with a thrust of his elbow; he climbed in, turned on the light, flipped on the microphone, unlocked the office door, and emerged with that competent relaxed smile of his, which we came to know after Grenada, Libya, Reykjavik, and Moscow; proceeding with the introduction of the speaker. And all that was thirty years before bringing peace in our time!

In later years I thought his movements that night a nifty allegory of his approach to foreign policy, the calm appraisal of a situation, the willingness to take risks, and then the decisive moment: leading to lights and sound—and music, the music of the spheres.

We stayed friends.

Twenty years later he was running for President of the United States. Early that winter the Soviet military had charged into Afghanistan, beginning a long, costly, brutal exercise. A week or two after he was nominated in Detroit, I wrote him. I told him I thought he would be elected. And told him then that, on the assumption that on reaching the White House he might wish to tender me an office, I wished him to know that I aspired to no government job of any kind.

He wrote back that he was disappointed. "I had in mind," he said, "to appoint you ambassador to Afghanistan." Over the next eight years, in all my communications with him, I would report fleetingly on my secret mission in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, where, in our fiction, I lived and worked. In his letters to me he would always address me as Mr. Ambassador. The show must go on, where Ronald Reagan was involved.

Ronald Reagan, An American Hero, *page 121*

Soon after his election I was asked by the Philadelphia Society to speak on the theme, "Is President Reagan doing all that can be done?" It was a coincidence that my wife, Pat, and I had spent the weekend before the Philadelphia speech as guests of the President and Mrs. Reagan in Barbados. I recalled with delight an exchange I had with my host on the presidential helicopter. We were flying to our villa the first evening, before the two days on Easter weekend reserved for bacchanalian sunning and swimming on the beach in front of Claudette Colbert's house. I leaned over and told him I had heard the rumor that the Secret Service was going to deny him permission to swim on that beach on the grounds that it was insufficiently secure. I asked him whether that were so, that he wouldn't be allowed in the water.

Helicopters, even Air Force One helicopters, are pretty noisy, but I was able to make out what he said. It was, "Well, Bill, Nancy here tells me I'm the most powerful man in the Free World. If she's right, then I will swim tomorrow with you."

Which indeed he did.

I recall also that during one of our swims I said to him, "Mr. President, would you like to earn the *National Review* Medal of Freedom?" He confessed to being curious as to how he would qualify to do this. I explained: "I will proceed to almost drown, and you will rescue me." We went through the motions, and that evening I conferred that medal on him, in pectore.

* * *

I remember telling the Philadelphia Society that the most powerful man in the Free World is not powerful enough to do everything that needs to be done. Retrospectively, I have speculated on what I continue to believe was the conclusive factor in the matter of American security against any threat of Soviet aggression. It was the character of the occupant of the White House; the character of Ronald Reagan. The reason this is so, I have argued, is that the Soviet Union, for all that from time to time it miscalculated tactically, never miscalculated in respect of matters apocalyptic in dimension. And the policymakers of the Soviet Union knew that the ambiguists with whom they so dearly loved to deal were not in power during those critical years. So that if ever the Soviet leaders were tempted to such suicidal foolishness as to launch a strike against us, suicidal is exactly what it would have proven to be. The primary obstacle to the ultimate act of Soviet imperialism was the resolute U.S. determination to value what we have, over against what they, under Soviet dominion, had; value it sufficiently to defend it with all our resources.

Ronald Reagan, in my judgment, animated his foreign policy by his occasional diplomatic indiscretions: because of course it *was* a diplomatic indiscretion to label the Soviet Union an "evil empire." But then, quite correctly, he would switch gears when wearing diplomatic top hat and tails. He did not on those occasions talk the language of John Wayne—or of Thomas Aquinas.

But how reassuring it was for us, you remember, every now and then ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall"), to vibrate to the music of the very heartstrings of the Leader of the Free World who, to qualify convincingly as such, had after all to *feel* a total commitment to the Free World. When in formal circumstances the President ventured out to exercise conviviality with the leaders of the Soviet Union, the scene was by its nature wonderful, piquant: What would he say that was agreeable, congenial, to the head of the evil empire? The summit conferences brought to mind the Russian who, on discovering that his pet parrot was missing, rushed out to the KGB office to report that his parrot's political opinions were entirely unrelated to his own.

* * *

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The Reagan years accustomed us to a mood about life and about government. There were always the interruptions, the potholes of life. But Ronald Reagan had strategic visions. He told us that most of our civic problems were problems brought on or exacerbated by government, not problems that could be solved by government.

That, of course, is enduringly true. Only government can cause inflation, preserve monopoly, and punish enterprise. On the other hand, it is only a government leader who can critically affect a national mood or put his stamp on a historical period. One refers not to the period of Shakespeare, but to the period of Elizabeth. Reagan's period was brief, but he did indeed put his stamp on it. He did this in part because he was scornful of the claims of omnipotent government, in part because he felt, and expressed, the buoyancy of the American Republic.

* * *

It is fine that the Ronald Reagan Library, Museum, and Center for Public Affairs, which serves as our host, will collect his papers and ambient literature, permitting generations of students and scholars to explore and linger over those happy years which augured the end of the Soviet threat, the revitalization of our economy, and a great draft of pride in our country. To the library I'll convey in years ahead my own collection of letters from Ronald Reagan. The very last one written from the White House, the day the Soviet Union announced that it would withdraw from Afghanistan, began:

> Dear Mr. Ambassador:
>
> Congratulations! The Soviets are moving out of Afghanistan. I knew you could do it if I only left you there long enough, and you did it without leaving Kabul for a minute.

He closed by saying, "Nancy sends her love to you and Pat."

That was eleven years ago, and we cherish it today, and through her, convey our own love and gratitude to the President, on his 88th birthday.

AN INTRODUCTION TO

Ronald Reagan: An American Hero

THIS book is a work of devotional art. I am in the publishing business and happily record that I haven't seen a more beautiful biographical portrait of anyone, living or dead. The design is functional and ingenious, the text—to be sure, worshipful—is spare, and exquisitely presented on the page. The pictures are knock-'em-dead, evoking episodes in the life of its subject, from school days (*"There are advantages to being elected president. The day after I was elected, I had my high-school grades classified as Top Secret"*) through his myriad careers, right to retirement. And, at the very end, a single, small, candid photograph, a kiss on his 89th birthday by his wife, lover, nurse, and idol.

Contemplating this brief introduction, after reading the book and, most important, viewing it, I have thought to say that whatever the skills of the writers, photographers, and designers who put it together, it couldn't have been assembled about anyone else. Just to begin with, there is the physical factor. An indulgent nature went extravagantly to work, endowing him & her with an extraordinary animal beauty. There was that, and the photogenic aptitude, matched perhaps by the two Kennedys, but otherwise unrivaled. Interrupt your reading of this text and turn to page 121, a picture of the two during his first gubernatorial campaign. Turn then to page 182, the president toasting a foreign prime minister. Everything celebrated by this book is there in that picture: grace, benignity, presence, pride.

* * *

If it sounds as if I had been carried away, that's how it should sound. The career of Reagan is, like Lincoln's, mythogenic beginning to end. Brought up in Illinois farm country, the son of unschooled parents, his father an alcoholic. The teenager who worked his way through college with an athletic scholarship. Looking for work during the Depression he was buoyed by the very idea of radio coverage of sports events, at which he excelled, even when the wires went dead, leaving him to imagine and relate what was going on in the stadium he couldn't see. On to Hollywood, the Screen Actors' Guild, television, then the governorship, the White House; a historic democratic revalidation in 1984, and, soon after his retirement, the fruit of policies undertaken by him as president: the dissolution of a globalist threat launched in 1917, when he was six years old, and the continued revival of the domestic economy.

Providence held out for Ronald Reagan. His mother had assured him, as a boy, that it would be so for a dutiful son. That was less than a divine warrant for uninterrupted good fortune. The pitfalls are here recorded, though they do not slow down the momentum of life and destiny fulfilled. The editors do not make light of an assassination attempted, or a conclusive illness contracted. But the narrative adamantly reflects the character and temperament of the man it celebrates, the sunny and resourceful optimist. The reader is here to luxuriate in the heroic aspects of a life that lent itself to the making of historical poetry, and happily agrees to be edged into fantasy.

That life is captured by adroit text and recorded tributes from many of his countrymen; but, mostly, by pictures.

These portray what journalist David Broder called "a kind of personal ease and charm that not only delighted his audiences, but disarmed his critics." The American whose "wit and grace he elevated to the level of legend."

* * *

This resplendent volume is fit celebration of that legend, this legend. And, on the death of Ronald Reagan, a permanent reminder of the man, and his widow. **NR**

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A New Beginning

PAUL JOHNSON

PRESIDENT REAGAN is likely to occupy a significant place in history. His eight-year presidency was a turning point both in the fortunes of his own country and in the history of the world—and the two were closely connected. It is not easy, now, to cast one's mind back to the year in which Reagan won office, because everything has changed so radically. Nineteen eighty found an America wearied by what was perhaps the worst decade in its history—worse even than the '30s, because there was no anticipation of recovery. The 1970s had seen a president forced to retire in disgrace, and an unelected president with no mandate, beaten in turn by a feeble Democrat from the South who had no obvious policy or coherent view of the world. In Washington, a triumphant but leaderless Congress usurped executive authority, allowing a triumphant Soviet Union, and its surrogates in Cuba and Vietnam, to do what they willed in Africa and Asia. America's apparent decline as a great power was symbolized, in a terrible moment early in 1980, by a shocking military fiasco in Iran.

Reagan reversed all these trends decisively. He was not exactly a scholarly man, but he had the four characteristics required of any great leader. First, he had a few simple, strongly held, and tenaciously pursued convictions, which also happened to be right and popular. Second, he knew how to present them in plain terms that all could grasp. Third, on the issues he cared about most, he exercised a formidable will, which, though courteous, brooked no opposition till what he wanted was done. Fourth, he had style.

The style came to the front first. Reagan, upon taking office, was appalled by the decline in presidential ceremony, which he rightly connected with the collapse of presidential authority. He found a young man with a passion for restrained grandeur, made him chief of protocol at the White House, and soon all the smartness, precision, timing, and democratic swagger of presidential authority were restored. Against this backdrop, Reagan played the Big Role—with high seriousness and gravity, with deep respect for traditions going back to George Washington, but also with a huge, all-pervading sense of humor. To a great extent, he communicated in jokes, which themselves hid half-conscious political convictions—as when he said, "I'm not too worried about the deficit. It's big enough to take care of itself." (It did!)

Thus the American people, after a dismal decade, learned to laugh again, and to laugh at the invitation of their cheerful First Magistrate. And they laughed conscious of the fact that there was a good deal of steel behind the grin. Reagan almost effortlessly recovered the presidential powers usurped by Congress, which, to be fair, was only too willing to relinquish them. He stood up to the unions, making it clear that, where vital public interests are at risk, the presidential will must prevail. He made it plain to Latin American dictators that the rule of law applied to them no less than to others. Then he turned to the Soviet Union.

Here his few, simple convictions yielded real, flesh-and-blood results. Like Truman in his day, Reagan said, "Thus far and no further." Encroachments by the Communists would no longer be permitted. This was expressed in plain terms, and to back them the U.S. military was rearmed on a prodigious scale, and the go-ahead was given to advanced weapons systems that no other nation could match. For the first time since the Second World War, America's lead in high technology was exploited for all it was worth—both to demonstrate to the Soviet leaders its actuality as well as its potential, and so break their will, and to reestablish America's position as the world's most advanced economic power. The reassertion of American productive and spending vigor was aimed just as much at Japan—and her imitators and admirers—as at the men in the Kremlin.

Yet Reagan was also prepared to negotiate for peace, and he did so in a most

CORBIS

Mr. Johnson, the historian and journalist, is the author, most recently, of *Art: A New History*.

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Join the Vast Right-Wing CATHOLIC Conspiracy

Hillary Clinton said there was a Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy out to get her (sort of) hubby. The Conspiracy didn't topple Billy boy, but it did gore Al — the cool dude who no doubt invented unisex restrooms — and prevent him from ascending to the presidency. Never underestimate the power of a conspiracy, or even a single conspirator! (Every vote counts, as you *now* know.)

Just as there's an intense struggle going on for the soul of America, so there's an epic struggle going on for the heart of the Catholic Church.

The NEW OXFORD REVIEW, founded in 1977, is at the heart of the Vast Right-Wing CATHOLIC Conspiracy that's now driving liberal Catholics into a state of pre-senile panic. You see, traditional dioceses and religious orders are producing lots of vocations, whereas liberal dioceses and religious orders aren't. All the energy in the Church is found among traditional Catholics, who have large families, who are revolutionizing education via home-schooling, who are virtually the only Catholic presence on radio and TV, who are founding *new* seminaries and colleges, and who are spearheading the only massive grassroots movement in the Church, the prolife movement.

Meanwhile, liberal nay-saying Catholics, who haven't had an innovative idea since the Sixties, sit in their overstuffed tenured chairs, their bureaucratic sinecures, and their gourmet restaurants. And they're greying and balding — getting puffy and flabby just like their "Catholic" hero Ted Kennedy.

The monthly NEW OXFORD REVIEW isn't like other orthodox Catholic publications. We do more than discuss theology, morality, catechetics, and spirituality, do more than analyze Church news. We also show how ridiculous those dissenting Catholics — those smug pooh-bahs and quislings of the *Zeitgeist* — really are. And why not? What's patently ridiculous deserves — by definition — to be ridiculed. If you find the state of the Church tormenting, we'll lift your spirits by making you laugh at your tormentors. After all, we're headquartered in Berkeley — a.k.a. Berserkeley — and we've *had* to learn and cultivate the fine art of laughing!

You'll want to photocopy material from the NOR and send it to your foes, for a fuzzball Catholic will always ignore your arguments, but there's one thing he can't handle, and that's when the laugh's on him. Humor can be therapeutic, not only for you but for him, for he may experience a *shock of recognition*, forcing him to see everything in a new light.

So join our rollicking Catholic Conspiracy by subscribing today, and start to *enjoy* being a loyal Catholic. As Hilaire Belloc said, "Wherever the Catholic sun doth shine, there's music and laughter and good red wine." You'll find it so at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW!

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energetic manner, offering to scrap arms provided that reciprocal reduction could be verified. This combination of rearmament and search for a settlement had a catalyzing effect on the Soviet leadership, persuading them, or enough of them, to embark on a critical reexamination of Communist fundamentals. And this, in turn, led to the shattering discovery that the command economy could not be reformed—it could only be abandoned.

Thus, in an astonishing paradox that will continue to intrigue historians for generations to come, Reagan's successful attempt to restore American self-confidence provoked the collapse of Soviet self-confidence, producing in rapid succession the demise of the Communist state, the dismantlement of the Russian empire, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself. The end of the Cold War came after Reagan retired, but he had clearly set in motion the chain of events that made the West's victory inevitable.

Reagan's efforts to reassert the paramountcy of American military power, and his accompanying restoration of the nation's belief in itself—not unaided, incidentally, by tax cuts and other measures improving economic freedom—led to a reinvigoration of America's spirit of enterprise on a scale no one had anticipated or dared to hope for. This too continued long after Reagan retired—it continues still—and it ended all loose academic and media talk of the inevitable decline of a once-great power.

The Reagan presidency was a turning point in U.S. and world history. The world began to move more rapidly than ever toward a global society under the informal leadership of a United States that had recovered its morale and its sense that the future held limitless potential. All this was brought about not by one man, but by a society led by a man whose time for greatness had come—and who knew it.

The details were highly technological, but the essence was traditional: Reagan was a wagon-train leader, conducting his followers over the mountains, without an accurate map or a precise idea of their destination, or what exactly they would do when they got there, but confident in a happy ending.

Of course, there are no final happy endings in history, because history does not end. But Reagan offered Americans an opportunity to open a fresh chapter, to reinvent themselves in new guises but on traditional lines, and they eagerly grasped it. Then the star said goodbye and the epiphany ended. But it was a good thing to have seen. **NR**

reagan remembered

MICHAEL EVANS

"His biographers have barely touched the spiritual side of the man, and particularly not the issue of the sanctity of life. He more than once stated that his greatest regret as governor was having signed into law a liberalization of abortion in California. He felt that he had been misled about the legislation and was determined to avoid the course of liberalized and legal abortion in the future. When he wrote 'Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation' [an essay later published in book form], he became the only sitting president to write any type of book while in the White House. It was 1983, the tenth anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*, and he wrote it over the advice of his political counselors, who said, 'Let's not publish it now so close to the election.' He said, 'I might not be re-elected. We're going with it now.'"

—WILLIAM CLARK

The Psychological Effect

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

RONALD REAGAN'S legacy is not one of ideological purity. He raised taxes and signed liberal abortion legislation in California. Despite his "evil empire" speech, he was not the preeminent Cold Warrior: Truman and Eisenhower had both fashioned the policy of containment and deterrence. It was Barry Goldwater who laid the foundation of sagebrush conservatism. In contrast, federal spending went up during Reagan's two presidential terms. It was Reagan, not George W. Bush, who set the precedent of a Republican piling up larger federal deficits than do many Democrats.

And we forget now the various resignations, palace coups, and job switches that occurred during Reagan's terms in office. Iran-Contra and the withdrawal from Lebanon weakened America's reputation abroad. Astrology, the sometimes embarrassing confessions of the presidential children, and occasional misstatements about the past did not always reflect bedrock values.

Instead, Reagan's greatest contributions were more psychological, amounting to nothing less than a reawakening of the American faith in common sense and blunt speech. True, his one-liners sometimes reflected intellectual laziness, but far more often they were insightful ways of cutting through obfuscation to separate truth from lies.

Remember Reagan's debates against more experienced and conventional politicians that he was supposed to lose? He won them precisely because he showed that his opponents' purported greater

Mr. Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, and author, most recently, of *Between War and Peace* (Random House).

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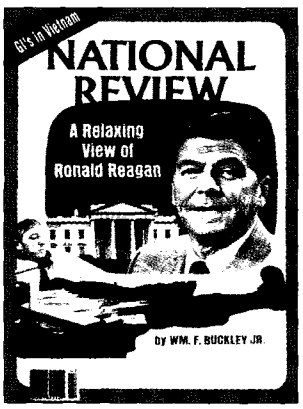
grasp of detail and nuance did not result in real wisdom. In 1980, Jimmy Carter thought that he could rattle the older and supposedly less experienced Reagan by scaring the nation silly over Social Security and nuclear warfare—until Reagan scoffed, "There you go again." And if that was not enough to crush the sitting president, his closing line—"Are you better off than you were four years ago?"—surely was. With those two sentences he revealed to the nation a different sort of Jimmy Carter, whose orneriness in fact hid his own incompetence.

Reagan's uncommon good sense extended to sound judgments about controversial people who were similarly outspoken and principled. He was an early supporter of Pat Moynihan's courageous efforts to end decades of hypocrisy at the United Nations at a time when even many Republicans still viewed the institution as a sacred cow. Jeane Kirkpatrick's insightful distinctions between Communists and right-wing dictators won over an unabashedly supportive Reagan. He praised Soviet dissidents—even as a cautious Gerald Ford refused to meet Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.

In some cases, Reagan's blunt words and decisive actions changed the course of both national and global history. In August 1981 the air-traffic controllers' union assumed it could not only ignore its sworn pledge not to strike, but could shut down the entire American aviation grid if it did not obtain a 100 percent raise. Reagan ignored the conventional wisdom that the union was essential to the American economy, and instead gave the 13,000 federal employees 48 hours to return to work—or else. When 11,400 forfeited their jobs, he sent a message to Americans that he was serious about fighting inflation and holding unions to their word—and showed the world that the Soviets had a tough new negotiator on their hands.



November 28, 1967

Unlike the supposedly maverick Carter, who in fact surrounded himself with liberal-establishment academics and policy insiders, Reagan not only held a deep distrust of the accepted cargo of American governance—Ivy League education, intimate and long familiarity with Washington and New York, and intellectual pretension—but also deliberately tried to avoid the usual language of diplomatic prevarication. His reduction of complex and nuanced problems into simple equations involving right and wrong infuriated the elites, not because he was necessarily wrong, but precisely because he was so often right and thus called into question the prerequi-

From our Catalogue

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The abiding problem of politics is ordering the conditions of life in a humanly satisfying way through the creation of objectively effective and subjectively meaningful institutions. Political order is constituted by symbols which represent what is conceived as the truth about the world and our nature as a part within it. The substance of political existence is psyche and hence the discourse that arises from it will always be hermeneutic. Political society is the space we create as historical beings through spiritual freedom. In political existence, institutions replace instinct and meaning replaces need. Political activity is a human vocation common to all. It cannot be avoided and must be responded to. It is the weakness of modern political consciousness to think that we can be so transformed as to be delivered from history while acting in history, and from political concerns while living in political society, or that the desperate modern situation renders political activity worthless. Mature political wisdom knows that neither history nor fate can be bypassed.

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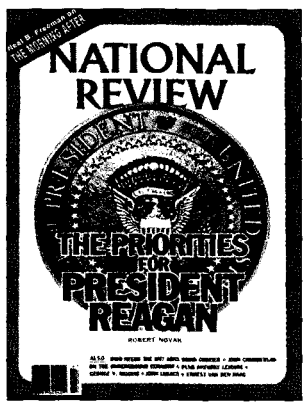
sites of political sagacity. Reagan's habit was to reduce a dilemma to an easy choice between principle and expediency. His rhetoric was memorable precisely because it flew in the face of conventional wisdom and drew responses like, "He can't say that." But of course he could—and did—because "that" was so often true.

We often think that democratic societies are by nature wholly populist, and so distrust snooty experts and vapid intellectuals. In fact, historically speaking, democracies often are vulnerable precisely because the People sometimes feel that they lack the capacity for self-governance without an array of specialists and advisers who know better than they. Thus, in all democratic cultures we occasionally witness the strange spectacle of grandees who masquerade as common men even as they talk down to the unwashed. It is rarer still, however, to see conservative politicians who both distrust the creed of state-enforced egalitarianism and speak plainly to the masses as one of their own.

What, then, is Reagan's legacy? In some ways, George W. Bush—"the axis of evil" and "smoke 'em out"—is to Clinton as Reagan was to Carter: the supposedly less capable man displaying a far greater understanding than his predecessor in times of peril. The current idea that volumes of position papers and hordes of professors might not be just superfluous, but downright silly, is Reaganesque to the core.



November 28, 1980

In the end Reaganism encompassed the very strange ideas that a conservative who wished to cut government entitlements could be more popular with the People than their liberal benefactors; that a wealthy, self-made man could feel more at home with a ranch hand or a policeman than would a Marxist Harvard professor; that an "aw shucks" naïf could out-debate the best-prepped policy wonk; and that a Hollywood actor could take the measure of a Soviet apparatchik or a Third World cutthroat far better than the brain trust of the U.S. State Department.

Only in America. **NR**

The Roller Back

PETER W. RODMAN

On March 8, 1983, President Reagan famously identified the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and the "focus of evil in the modern world." The reaction of the sophisticates was swift: "primitive," huffed both TRB in *The New Republic* and Anthony Lewis in the *New York Times*. Other commentators were convinced that all negotiations with the Soviet Union would be undermined. No such thing happened. On the contrary, Reagan was later to engage in a quite productive series of negotiations with a reformist Soviet leadership.

On June 12, 1987, Reagan gave an equally memorable address at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, calling out dramatically to Mikhail Gorbachev, "Tear down this wall!" I served in the White House then, and found myself caught between the president's speechwriters, who defended the strong language that he wanted, and the State Department and NSC experts, who had a battery of arguments why it was "inappropriate." The president's speech said exactly what he wanted it to say.

It is common for presidents to put their personal stamp on U.S. foreign policy, but in Reagan's case there was little that was common. His political instincts were as acute abroad as they were at home—that is to say, untutored, but canny. He understood the essence of the matter: The Soviet Union was evil, and doomed; the United States was the hope of mankind; we should help our friends and confound our enemies; it was better for the democracies to be strong than weak. Simple truths, you might suppose, but all these simple truths went against the prevailing wisdom of our political class.

It is rare in history, moreover, for a leader's strong personal convictions to coincide so closely with the moment of historical necessity. That is when lightning strikes and leaves the mark of greatness. Reagan's unashamed espousal of economic freedom was in sync with the inevitable and overdue reassessment of the accumulated failures of the welfare state. In foreign affairs, too, his reaffirmation of American self-confidence came at the moment when the American people were ready, nay eager, to be led out of their post-Vietnam funk and to put an end to humiliations like the Tehran hostage crisis and the arrogant adventurism of Leonid Brezhnev. The tide was about to turn.

Reagan led the restoration of the global balance of power, presiding over the West's rearmament and maximizing all pressures, economic as well as political, against the Soviet system. Our arms buildup was not only a means of redressing the dangerous strategic imbalance that had been allowed to develop; it was also a form of economic pressure on a regime whose fundamental weakness Reagan was convinced of. All these pressures on the Soviets were part of a deliberate strategy, one outlined in such internal documents as National Security Decision Directive 75 of January 17, 1983. We even conspired with the Saudis to keep oil prices low to deny Moscow foreign exchange.

As the revolution in supercomputers and telecommunications began to sweep the Free World, Reagan boldly embraced the idea of a defense against ballistic missiles (the Strategic Defense Initiative) that flaunted our technological edge and had a devastating psychological effect on the Kremlin. Several ex-Soviet officials have testified to SDI's effect in convincing Gorbachev that the Soviets were bound to lose a continuing arms race. On SDI, Reagan once again defied the experts.

In the Third World, another key arena of Cold War competition, the "Reagan Doctrine" got the U.S. into the business of rolling back the Soviet geopolitical offensive. Grenada was liberated from leftist thugs in October 1983. In Angola, in Nicaragua, in Cambodia, and most significantly in Afghanistan, the United States armed or otherwise aided insurgent move-

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ments fighting to overthrow Marxist-Leninist regimes. Elsewhere in the Third World, free-market ideas caught on; the revolution in economic thinking knew no boundaries.

Reagan's secret lay in the moral and ideological impetus driving rollback. It was the unabashed championing of democracy that helped revive America's self-confident engagement in the world. His delegitimization of the Soviet regime turned out to be the most powerful weapon of all against a new generation of Soviet leaders beset by doubts about their own system's performance and prospects. The contest was, at bottom, a moral one, and Reagan understood this better than most of the experts.

He had his lapses. In Lebanon in 1983-84, he clung too long to an incoherent military policy by trying to split the difference between advisers who wanted to intervene more decisively and advisers who wanted out. But he finally had the wit to cut his losses. Sometimes, Reagan's preoccupation with abolishing nuclear weapons served his aim of achieving deep reductions of such weapons in negotiations with the Soviets; at other times it rattled our NATO allies that he denounced the very weapons that the organization had relied on for 40 years. And there was Iran-Contra: The policy of wooing the ayatollahs (though not the diversion of funds to the Contras) bore Reagan's personal and enthusiastic imprint, and it was a strategic blunder.

The monumental achievement remains, these lapses notwithstanding. The Western revival and final counteroffensive that shook the Soviet system were his doing. Yes, they were also the fruition of decades of bipartisan and Allied solidarity; and yes, they depended on the courage of millions inside the Soviet empire who resisted its oppression. But it was Reagan who rallied the West and whose forthrightness gave hope to those in the East. Not long after he left office, his once-controversial characterization of the Soviet system was repeated on U.S. television by the young foreign minister of a newly democratic Russia. It was a mistake to refer to it as the "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," Andrei Kozyrev cheerily and matter-of-factly instructed David Brinkley in August 1991. "It was, rather, [an] evil empire, as it was once put." **NR**

The President and The Pope

GEORGE WEIGEL

THEY may have seemed, at first blush, an unlikely pair: the American B-movie actor turned conservative politician, and the mystical, philosophical, poetically inclined Polish priest turned Pope. Yet historical coincidences that both would describe as providential led them to become the chief figures in the collapse of European Communism. Moreover, the dynamics of the relationship between Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II teach us something important about how history actually works.

Journalistic fantasists like Carl Bernstein notwithstanding, there was no "holy alliance," no conspiracy between President Reagan and Pope John Paul to bring down the Soviet empire. For the hard, chronological fact of the matter is that John Paul II did his maximum damage to the Communist enterprise during his epic first pilgrimage to Poland in June 1979, 19 months before Reagan became president. But if there was neither alliance nor conspiracy, there was a common purpose born of a set of shared convictions. And the convictions were decisive for their way of governance, as both men displayed a calm but settled determination to trust their own instincts rather than the conventional wisdom of those in Washington and the Vatican who imagined themselves more realistic about world affairs.

The fact that they were both actors made a great difference—not only in terms of communication skills, but even more importantly in shaping how both men looked at the human condition and its possibilities. The president and the Pope never discussed their respective theatrical careers in any depth. They didn't have to. Each recognized in the other a shared sense of the drama of late-20th-century life and of Communism's role in that drama. Both were convinced that Communism was not simply a matter of stupid economics; it was a moral evil, an affront to human dignity, and a danger to mankind's dramatic quest for freedom. They also shared theater-based convictions about the power of the spoken word to shape lives and destinies. Knowing that Communism was a lie, both sensed that speaking truth to Communist power could cut through the fog of mendacity in totalitarian societies and give oppressed peoples tools of resistance that Communism could not blunt.

And both demonstrated in action that this conviction was no romantic fantasy. When President Reagan boldly described the Soviet Union as an empire run by an evil system, as when John Paul II dramatically challenged his Polish countrymen to reclaim their national culture and identity in June 1979, statesmen who imagined themselves more realistic and prudent cringed. But the souls of ordinary men and women were stirred, and from aroused consciences a new type of revolution was born.

Above all, and in sharp contrast to their more cautious advisers, both Reagan and John Paul were convinced that Communism could—indeed must—be defeated, not simply accommodated. Neither man came to high office with a detailed plan for victory; both likely expected, in the late 1970s, that the struggle would continue beyond their lifetimes. Yet when Reagan watched John Paul's momentous Mass in Warsaw's Victory Square on June 2, 1979, he was deeply moved (according to his aide, Richard V. Allen). And it is not beyond the realm of possibility that, on that same day, both these men, who had never met but whose lives and leadership were soon to be entwined, came to the same strategic intuition: The Communist emperor had far fewer clothes than previously imagined.

John Paul's 1979 Polish pilgrimage ignited a revolution of conscience in east-central Europe that gave birth with-

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in 13 months to the Solidarity movement, and inspired similar eruptions of civil resistance throughout the Warsaw Pact. That revolution of conscience made possible the nonviolent political Revolution of 1989—which in turn led to the Soviet crack-up in 1991. Yuri Andropov, no fool, knew that the election of Karol Wojtyla as Pope was very bad news for the Soviet external empire and the Soviet Union itself; he set in motion operations that led, eventually, to the assassination attempt on John Paul in May 1981. But John Paul's "soft power" revolution had a chance for success because of the "hard power" context in which it unfolded throughout the 1980s: the rearmament of the West on which Reagan insisted and the robust ideological challenge that Reagan (who also survived a 1981 assassination attempt) mounted. Neither the Pope's soft-power revolution nor Reagan's hard-power challenge could have done the job by itself. Each needed the other. Together, they provided the keys to victory. Without formal coordination, even without very much discussion between the principals, Reagan and John Paul pursued, with astonishing success, parallel courses toward the same end: the defeat of Communism and the restoration of east-central Europe to freedom.

In a picture-driven media age, images of the white-clad Pope bending over American satellite reconnaissance photography while being briefed (on Reagan's instructions) by William Casey or Vernon Walters can seem the stuff of which history is made. The truth is that the convictions these two giant figures shared were far more important.

Their entwined destinies stand as a powerful reminder that worldly realism isn't entirely realistic when it factors the realm of the human spirit out of the policy calculus. History is not simply the story of the contest for political power. Still less is history the exhaust fumes of the "means of production." At the end of a century that began with confident expectations of religion withering away, religious belief and moral conviction—supported by the judicious exercise of power—bent history's course in a more humane direction.

The two true believers were right, after all. **NR**

Ron & Maggie

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

A FAMOUS left-wing poster parodied the Reagan-Thatcher alliance as a remake of *Gone with the Wind*, with Reagan as Rhett sweeping Maggie off her feet. The poster was adopted by its opponents and decorated many a young conservative's apartment: It conveyed, more successfully than its authors had intended, a certain romantic quality in the "special relationship" between the president and the prime minister.

Not that the relationship was romantic in the obvious sense. Mrs. Thatcher was slightly star-struck at her first meetings with ex-Governor Reagan in the mid-'70s when she was the new and uncertain leader of the Tory opposition. In her childhood she went often to a local cinema owned by family friends where she almost certainly saw Reagan in his Hollywood prime. Doubtless she was swept away twice weekly by him, as by Errol Flynn and all the other celluloid heroes of that golden age. She always liked to be surrounded by tall, well-dressed, conventionally good-looking men (that at least is the most plausible explanation for some of her ministerial appointments). And Reagan exerted in private the same charisma that made him a star on screen. It would have been second nature to him to exert it on someone with Mrs. Thatcher's Dresden-china looks and conventional ladylike manners. All this doubtless added a pleasant frisson to their first meetings—and made their subsequent political alliance a genuinely sympathetic friendship.

But the Reagan-Thatcher relationship is a romance out of Horatio Alger rather than Harlequin novels. Both were outsiders in their respective political establishments. Mrs. Thatcher was a provincial, lower-middle-class Methodist girl who lived above her father's grocery shop. She was the embodiment of provincial Methodist values—diligence, sobriety, self-reliance, charity—and her success in life and government is largely explained by that fact. But these virtues, with their slightly puritan overtones, were hardly a ticket to success in a cynical, smart, metropolitan Tory establishment that regarded the management of national decline as statesmanship. And she had to battle every inch of the way, even as prime minister, to get her colleagues to pursue policies that reflected those virtues.

Reagan was the son of the town drunk, graduate of a small Midwestern college, and a Hollywood actor. From this background he drew a set of homely traditional values that almost exactly reflected Mrs. Thatcher's Methodist virtues. They made him no less of an outsider in Washington than Mrs. Thatcher in Westminster—read the columns of writers like James "Scotty" Reston on Reagan's 1976 campaign to get a sense of the hostile condescension with which the establishment treated him.

Reagan soared above this hostility by virtue of his personal charm; Thatcher gritted through it by virtue of her ability and diligence; but both had to wait for many years before their achievements were adequately recognized by the political world. They became icons before they were fully accepted socially.

In addition to being social outsiders, both Reagan and Thatcher chose to embrace a conservatism that in the 1960s was regarded as primitive, outmoded, and probably vicious. Their conservatism was composed of three highly unfashionable doctrines—anti-Communism, the free market, and self-reliance—and it was infused throughout with old-fashioned patriotism. Almost all the clever people on both sides of the Atlantic (and in both political parties) thought such ideas were nostalgia at best and fascism at worst. It required moral and intellectual courage to advocate them openly. Mrs. Thatcher fought a long parliamentary game in which she gradually defeated or converted the skeptics in her own party. Reagan's battles as presidential candidate were more public. He is now depicted as a universally sunny optimist who charmed America into conservatism. In those days, however, he was a bare-knuckled political fighter who took highly controversial political stands and faced riots and threats as a result.

Such outsiders came to power, moreover, in the only circumstances in which outsiders ever come to power: grave national crisis. Thatcher was elected to

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cope with the galloping stagflation and trade-union dominance that had jointly produced the collapse of essential services in the "winter of discontent." Reagan defeated Carter when the "misery index" was in double digits; the Russians were in Afghanistan; and the hostages were in the Tehran embassy. Both therefore faced almost identical difficulties—a failing economy and rising threats abroad. Both had to spend their first few years in power sustaining a tough economic policy that purchased future prosperity at the cost of high unemployment. And against this difficult background, both had to make further controversial decisions such as increasing defense spending and installing missiles in Western Europe.

It is hardly surprising that each gave strong political support to the other—Reagan urging, "Stay the Course," and Thatcher intoning, "There Is No Alternative." They had few reliable political allies elsewhere—and no political allies who shared the same view on so many topics. And after they had turned their respective economies around, circa 1983, and won their foreign-policy spurs in the Falklands and Grenada, theirs became an almost-wartime partnership, steering the Atlantic alliance toward the same strategic and economic goals. The rest is history.

Of course, they had differences. Some were minor tactical disagreements: Should tax cutting precede budget cutting? Some were misunderstandings: An NSC official told me that Mrs. Thatcher was not informed in advance about the invasion of Grenada because Reagan assumed she would be delighted. Small island, big mistake. And some were real disagreements: Mrs. Thatcher did not believe that Star Wars (which she supported) would abolish nuclear weapons. She was probably right—at any rate Reagan shortly thereafter conceded her point. Like all their disputes, this one did not significantly disturb their future cooperation.

"Ronald Reagan won the Cold War without firing a shot," she famously remarked. Less well-known is her following aside: "Not without a little help from friends." That seems about right. The Reagan-Thatcher partnership produced "the heroic age of conservatism." Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, and to be middle-aged was very heaven. **NR**

A Lion Like Churchill

STEVEN F. HAYWARD

WINSTON CHURCHILL recalled in his World War II memoirs that when the news of President Franklin Roosevelt's death reached him in London, "I felt as if I had been struck with a physical blow . . . I was overpowered by a sense of deep and irreparable loss."

Mr. Hayward is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and the author of *The Age of Reagan: The Fall of the Old Liberal Order, 1964-1980.* He is presently at work on a second volume, *The Age of Reagan: Lion at the Gate, 1980-1989*, from which this article is adapted.

Notwithstanding his long tragic illness, the passing of Ronald Reagan, who ranks next to Roosevelt as the most consequential president of the 20th century, will be felt no less severely by the millions of Americans who came to love him, and especially by conservatives, for whom there has been no greater champion.

While Reagan will be compared politically to Roosevelt because he represented a turning away from New Deal liberalism, as a man he deserves to be reckoned on the same scale of large-souled greatness as Winston Churchill. With the passage of time the similarities between Reagan and Churchill have become more evident. Some similarities are merely superficial. Both changed parties. Both had a flair for fine-tuning the English language, reaching for the right word, and achieving an economy of expression. The criticisms of their thinking are remarkably alike. Churchill, critics said, was a romantic refugee from the past, given to heroic imagery that was out of step with modern realities; he was

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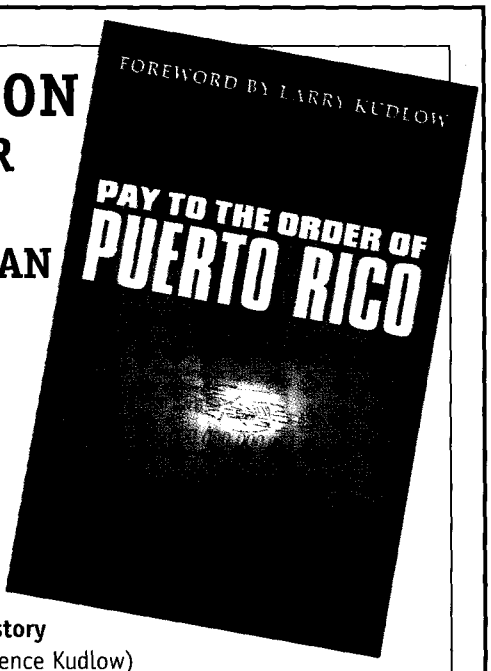

The poverty level in Puerto Rico is extremely high, despite a close relationship with the United States and it is kept in this territorial/poverty status just because the pharmaceutical companies want to pocket $4-5 billion in tax credits and Controlled Foreign Corporation profits while taking American jobs overseas.

Allegiance Press
The Right Answers for America

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reckless, and not to be trusted with supreme office. The same was said of the "cowboy" Reagan.

The deeper similarity between the two men was their extraordinary imagination, which extended to matters large and small. Above all, both Reagan and Churchill foresaw the end of the Cold War long before anyone else in high office. Foreign-policy sophisticates guffawed when Reagan said that Marxism was destined for the ash heap of history, and was "a sad, bizarre chapter . . . whose last pages are even now being written." In 1953, when Churchill was prime minister for the second time, he told his young aide John Colville that if he lived his normal span of life—which would take Colville into the 1990s—he would surely see Eastern Europe free from Communism.

Churchill and Reagan believed this because they both understood that Soviet Communism was doomed for metaphysical reasons, though neither of them put it in this kind of precious intellectual way. There is lively debate about whether Reagan himself thought the Soviet Union would collapse so quickly if pressed. His critics think he was more lucky than prescient; his view that the Soviet Union could be "transcended" was a matter more of narrow ideology than of insight, though it is never explained why Reagan, almost alone among conservatives, thought this. But Mikhail Gorbachev himself told the History Channel that "I am not sure what happened would have happened had he [Reagan] not been there." This is an argument without end, and it misses the most important point: Reagan had the insight and political will to say it could be done, the courage to try to make it happen, and the fortitude to stick it out when the going was rough.

Beyond the overt similarities and differences that can be described, there rests the more important question of human greatness, and whether Reagan belongs in the same company as Churchill. Despite Reagan's improving reputation since leaving office, this comparison will strike many as a stretch. This tells us more about how political life at the highest level is thought about today than it does about Reagan—or Churchill. Churchill's most popular biographer, William Manchester, employed as a hortatory theme the viewpoint that Churchill was "the last lion"—the last man of superlative virtue and courage, whose supreme greatness shall never be seen again on the human stage. Manchester attributes Churchill's greatness precisely to the extent to which Churchill was a Victorian anachronism in 1940, just as even some of Reagan's own senior staff and public admirers see him as an American anachronism.

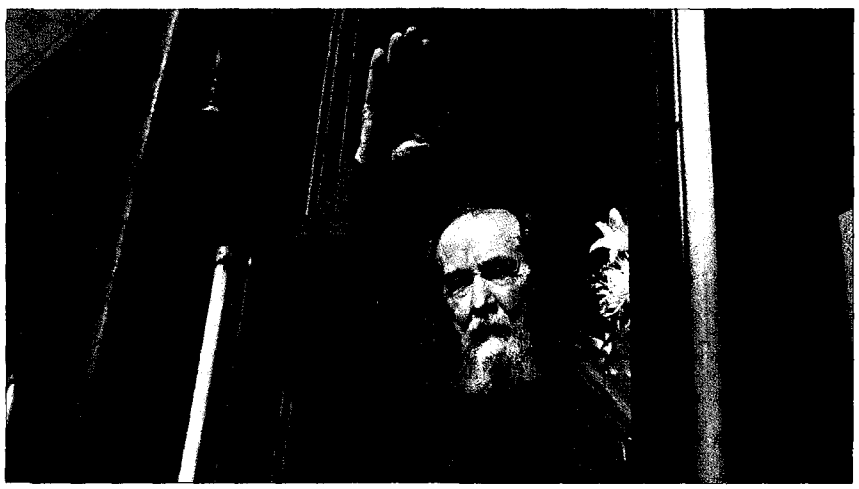
Of course all of us are powerfully affected by our environment, yet the case of Churchill and Reagan offers a decisive refutation to the historicist premise that human beings and human society are mostly corks bobbing on the waves of history. Churchill and Reagan prompt this question: Given that both had numerous capable contemporaries from similar environments, why were they virtually alone in their particular insights and resolves? The answer must be that they transcended their environments as only great men can do, thereby bending history to their will. The political philosopher Leo Strauss wrote of Churchill: "A man like Churchill proves that the possibility of *megalofuxia* [greatness of soul] exists today *exactly* as it did in the fifth century B.C." Likewise Reagan should be considered another lion—"the lion at the gate"—and never more so than at his famous moment at the Brandenburg Gate in West Berlin in 1987, when Reagan said, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" As we came to learn, virtually the entire foreign-policy apparatus of his administration, including the new national security adviser, Colin Powell, tried to stop Reagan from saying, "Tear down this wall!" But this lion's roar would not be muted.

Just as Reagan always said that America's greatest days were ahead, he would understand that it is always possible to summon the courage and roar of a lion when the times demand it. Reagan would resist being called our last lion; to those conservatives dispirited that there can never be another Ronald Reagan (forgetting that so many thought there could never be a Ronald Reagan in the first place), Reagan would say: Of course there can. To borrow from his first inaugural address, you "just don't know where to look." **NR**

a special message

In July 1975, I concluded my remarks in the reception room of the U.S. Senate with these words: "Very soon, all too soon, your government will need not just extraordinary men—but men of *greatness*. Find them in your souls. Find them in your hearts. Find them within the breadth and depth of your homeland." Five years later, I was overjoyed when just such a man came to the White House. May the soft earth be a cushion in his present rest.

—ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN
JUNE 7, 2004



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In Latin America

OTTO J. REICH

RONALD REAGAN changed the landscape of the Western Hemisphere as completely and positively as he changed the rest of the world's.

Recall the dire situation he inherited in January 1981. Less than two years before, in 1979, both Grenada and Nicaragua had fallen into the hands of Marxist regimes, the New Jewel Movement and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), respectively; both were busily establishing reigns of terror on their own territory and providing support to subversive movements in neighboring countries. In El Salvador, the Communist FMLN guerrilla army was so confident of victory that on January 10, just ten days before Reagan's inauguration, it launched a "final offensive," designed to defeat the remaining elements of the Salvadoran Armed Forces and take over the capital of San Salvador. In Cuba, Castro was possibly at the apogee of his global reach, with the Cuban military providing support to violent, radical forces or governments in dozens of countries on three continents: Africa, the Americas, and the Middle East. In Cuba itself, the USSR had a strong military presence.

In the Latin America of 1981, the majority of the population lived under military dictatorship. A majority lived in poverty, with little or no access to adequate housing, health care, education, nutrition, or basic justice. The few elected governments struggled under the combined weight of domestic and foreign terrorists, narcotics traffickers, recession, and high rates of inflation.

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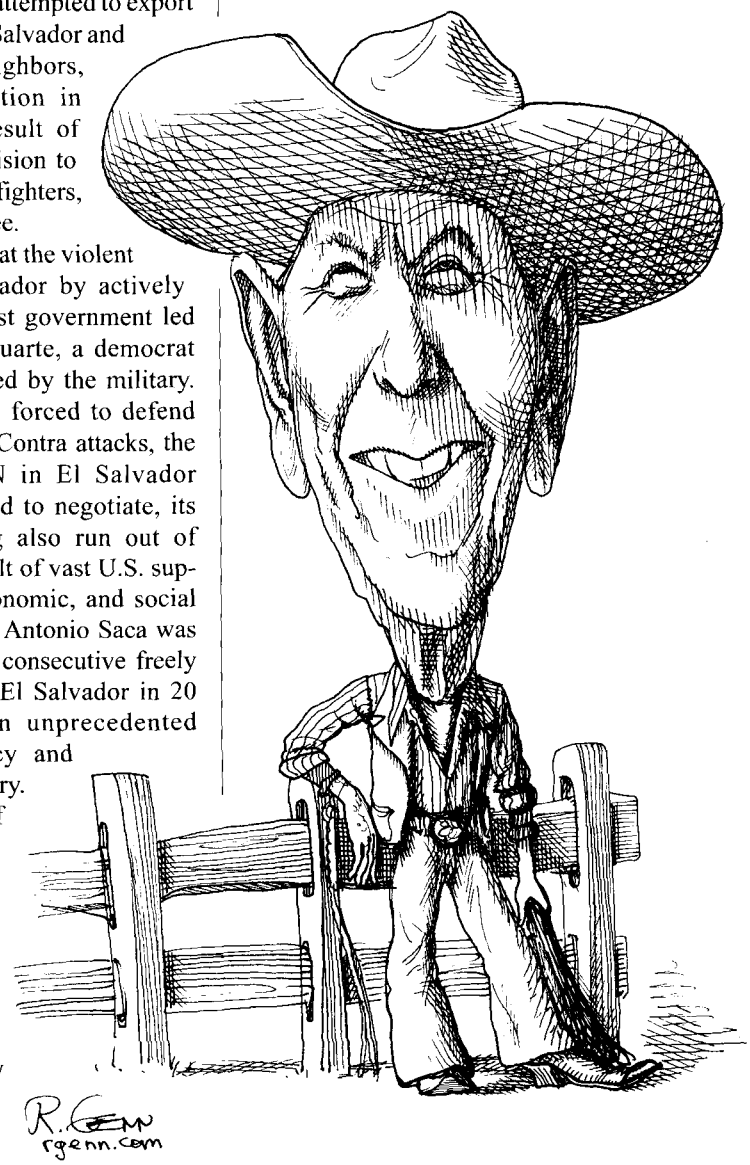
With the exception of rhetorical, though important, support for human rights, U.S. attention to the region was sporadic and amounted to little more than lip service. Polls revealed that as many as three-quarters of young Latin Americans would leave their countries if they had the opportunity. The future looked, and was, bleak.

Then Ronald Reagan, depicted as a dangerous right-wing cowboy, came into the picture. When Reagan left office eight years later, that picture had drastically improved, and would continue to improve for years as a result of his policies. Reagan answered the Communist menace in Nicaragua by encouraging, arming, and financing an indigenous army—the Contras—made up largely of peasants and local Indians who had been persecuted by the Sandinistas. The Sandinistas, who had attempted to export their revolution to El Salvador and threatened other neighbors, would lose an election in 1990. Partly as a result of Ronald Reagan's decision to support the freedom fighters, Nicaragua today is free.

Reagan helped defeat the violent extremes in El Salvador by actively supporting a reformist government led by José Napoleon Duarte, a democrat who had been tortured by the military. With the Sandinistas forced to defend themselves from the Contra attacks, the once-mighty FMLN in El Salvador would soon be forced to negotiate, its "insurgency" having also run out of steam partly as a result of vast U.S. support for military, economic, and social reforms. This month, Antonio Saca was sworn in as the fifth consecutive freely elected president of El Salvador in 20 years, reflecting an unprecedented record of democracy and progress in that country.

The first sign of Reagan's willingness to use U.S. military force to advance liberty came in Grenada in 1983. This sent a signal to the world that this president would pay the price necessary to defeat tyranny. Following a bloody internal power struggle among the Marxist rulers, the prime minister, Maurice Bishop, and scores of Grenadians were murdered by even more extreme Marxists. Chaos descended on the small Caribbean island nation, where 800 of Castro's soldiers and engineers were building a modern airfield to be used to refuel the airplanes flying Cuban troops to Africa. Under the New Jewel rule, Grenada had welcomed some of the most dangerous enemies of the U.S., including Mideast terrorists.

We now know that the invasion of Grenada started the decline of Soviet expansionism. It is ironic that possibly the smallest and most rapid military operation undertaken by the U.S. in the Cold War marked the beginning of the end of the Soviet empire. The Grenada



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liberation was a direct challenge to the Brezhnev Doctrine, first brutally applied in Czechoslovakia in 1968—that no country that was ruled by Communism would be allowed to reject it. And it was Castro's first taste of military defeat: By the time Reagan left office, Castro had been forced to retreat from most of his foreign adventures, his support for African and Latin American Marxists reduced by the impending bankruptcy of his Soviet patron and by a democratic revolution in Latin America. Soon he would be financially, as well as morally, bankrupt.

Encouraged by the U.S., Latin America would, in the 1980s, eliminate almost all of its dictatorships. By 1990, all of Latin America with the exception of Cuba was in democratic hands, the first time in history that such a proportion of the hemisphere enjoyed such freedom. It is no longer a secret that the administration sent high-level envoys, such as the late Gen. Vernon Walters, to warn would-be coup plotters to cease such actions or risk the wrath of the United States.

Reagan is not given sufficient credit for his commitment to Latin American freedom and democracy, much less for its social and economic progress. He knew that the region's problems were not caused only by Communist-inspired violence. To deal with the socioeconomic inequities, immediately upon coming into office Reagan practically doubled the aid budget to the region—but also added programs to emphasize private-sector growth. From the last Carter budget of a paltry $440 million for the entire hemisphere, U.S. economic assistance was increased to over $1.5 billion in just four years, in spite of sometimes vicious opposition from the media and members of Congress ideologically opposed to the Reagan administration. I know exactly how difficult the task was, because I had the privilege of being President Reagan's point man for those economic programs, as assistant administrator of the Agency for International Development.

In spite of all the problems faced by the hemisphere today, the challenges are more manageable because of the vision and courage of Ronald Reagan. **NR**

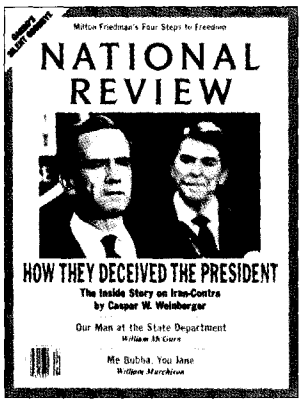
Reaganomics

LAWRENCE KUDLOW

ECONOMISTS were vexed during the 1970s, as unemployment and inflation rose together to stifle economic growth and all forms of investment. The Keynesian Phillips-curve paradigm, whereby employment and inflation are supposed to move in opposite directions, completely broke down. The Ivy League formula of increasing the money supply to spur growth, and high taxes to hold back inflation, had failed utterly.

Between the late 1960s and 1980, the U.S. inflation rate rose from 2 percent to 14 percent, while the unemployment rate gradually drifted higher, from 4 percent to almost 10 percent. It was a period of decline for the country. Americans were demoralized.

December 9, 1983


NATIONAL REVIEW
HOW THEY DECEIVED THE PRESIDENT
The Inside Story on Iran-Contra
by Caspar W. Weinberger
Our Man at the State Department
Me Bubba, You Jane

May 14, 1990

As stagflation became more deeply embedded in the U.S. economy, Soviet adventurism in Central and South America, Asia, and elsewhere around the world became more pronounced. The Soviets saw the U.S. cut and run from Vietnam. Our Cold War adversary saw nothing but weakness emanating from the U.S.

Ronald Reagan changed all that. From the moment of his swearing-in in January 1981, with his extraordinarily strong character and deep and abiding faith in God, Reagan acted relentlessly to revive the nation.

More than any modern president, Reagan understood the link between economic growth at home and American strength overseas. It was the Gipper's most brilliant insight. He acted swiftly to show our enemies that we would produce the necessary economic resources to do whatever it would take, for however long was necessary, to triumph over the Communist menace.

Immediately upon assuming office, he reversed the economic policy of the decline years. He brought down marginal tax rates, restoring the incentives necessary for economic growth. He gave Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker the strong ground to stand on, allowing him to harden the value of the dollar and slay inflation.

At bottom, what became known as Reaganomics was a new pro-growth policy mix of tax incentives at the margin and stable money. But there was more. The Californian launched a massive military buildup totaling about $1.5 trillion. He deregulated oil prices, proving the conventional wisdom wrong as energy became much cheaper. He launched U.S.-Canadian free trade. He was unyielding in his opposition to the air-traffic controllers' strike, firing thousands of these government workers and ending the anti-growth union stranglehold on private industry. He created individual retirement accounts and 401(k)s, giving birth to the investor class. He also slashed social spending by reducing domestic program levels (excluding Social Security and health care) by nearly $50 billion in 1981. That amount would come to about $90 billion today.

By 1986, Reagan's tax-reform plan left two marginal rates of 28 percent and 15 percent, a long stone's throw from the 70 percent top rate he had inherited. His plan also cut about 2,000 pages from the tax code.

Ideas matter. Results quickly followed for Reagan. Between 1982 and 1989, the economy grew, adjusting for inflation, by 35 percent: more than 4.5 percent per year. As growth was restored, tax rev-

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enues came flowing in. Income-tax revenues grew by 50 percent during this period even as tax rates dropped. By 1986, the inflation rate had fallen to 1 percent. By the end of his term, unemployment had dropped to 5.5 percent. Interest rates had plunged. The stock market had soared.

From July 1982 through the end of 1988, the S&P 500 averaged a near 21 percent annual gain. Brand-new industries arose in computing, software, communications, and the Internet—original endeavors that completely streamlined and transformed the American economy for the decades to come. In effect, Reaganomics launched a 20-year boom, the longest prosperity period in the 20th century.

Reagan critics to this day continue to harp on deficits and debt, rather than the growth miracle produced by Reaganomics. But they are factually wrong. Reagan inherited a budget gap of roughly 2.5 percent of the economy. By the end of his two terms, he left it exactly where he found it. In between, he restored our economic health and revitalized our standing around the world.

By the time of his summit meetings with Soviet chairman Gorbachev, Reagan was able to say calmly and diplomatically that the U.S. could produce the goods and the Soviets could not. In the next few years, the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed.

Reagan's visionary linkage of domestic economic recovery, military preparedness, and worldwide peace had worked with a stunning swiftness that literally no one but the former Hollywood actor had ever visualized.

The greatness of Ronald Reagan was his optimistic vision. His unequivocal belief in freedom and democracy, in America as a city on the hill, never faltered. His free-market prescription for economic growth relied on the creativity of ordinary people working in free enterprise rather than under government planning. He believed in entrepreneurship, not welfarism. He understood how to use military power. And his optimistic faith in America gave a moribund country a new life.

Reagan saved America. His passing is a sad occasion. But as his soul gazes down from the heavens, he will see that his ideas will live forever. **NR**

Two Accusations, Rebutted

MARK HELPRIN

In remembering Ronald Reagan with affection and pride, recounting his achievements, and recalling the rare qualities of the man himself, conservatives have been, in my view, inadequately defensive. Reagan's detractors are perfectly happy to concede that he had wit and warmth. They do not dispute his popularity. Some will even admit that Reagan had some involvement in ending the Cold War. They will allow all this because they do not give way on two essential points—the "Reagan Deficits" and "Star Wars"—that, if not checked, they will continue to press in the hope that history will condemn him.

First, his critics believe that even if the military buildup did cause or accelerate the fall of the Soviet Union it was an immoral risk that punished and pauperized the nation, filling its cities with the homeless as in Hogarth's London (though they miraculously disappeared on the first day of the Clinton presidency), and contributing to the enormous deficit that threatened to ruin the economy and the fiscal underpinnings of the state. Coupled with Reagan's inhumane opposition to proactive government it was a double disaster. Cutting taxes while at the same time allowing military spending to soar was the act not merely of a conservative, but of a Nero.

For the intelligentsia this is a postulate of faith. That is why, in my daughter's American history textbook, the eminent authors write, "The combination of tax reduction and huge increases in military spending opened a vast 'revenue hole' of $200 billion annual deficits. . . . The staggering deficits of the Reagan years assuredly constituted a great economic failure." That is why, in the lead story of his death, the AP wrote, "Reagan . . . tripled the national debt to $3 trillion in his singleminded competition with the other superpower." It is why, in analyzing his legacy, it wrote that because "Reagan powered up the military . . . his shining city was built on a mountain of debt," and why many learned articles treat of the "Reagan deficit(s)" and the phrase brings 1,200 Google hits.

Its only flaw is that it isn't true. For preserved in the tranquil and everlasting record are the figures that show that something almost everyone has come to believe is not so and never was so, no matter how many times it is repeated. If the deficits are to be attributed to tax cuts and military spending, the combined shortfall in revenues and increase in military outlays must reflect this. In the "Federal Budget Summary" of the 1991 Statistical Abstract of the United States, one can see what would have been spent if in the years 1982-1989 (the Reagan budget years) military spending had remained at 1981 levels, which is $1.26 trillion. Actual spending in the period was $2.024 trillion, a net increase of $764 billion.

Had revenues remained at 1981 levels, the government would have collected in the period 1982-1989 $4.7944 trillion. With the tax cuts that are generally believed to have choked off receipts, the government actually collected $6.1419 trillion, an increase (rather than a shortfall) of $1.3475 trillion.

Therefore, the net change attributable to the combined Reagan revenue and defense-spending policies was an increase of $583.5 billion, or just short of $73 billion/yr. It doesn't matter how much smarter than Ronald Reagan you think you are, or that you write for *The New York Review of Books* and he was an actor, or that you were a Rhodes Scholar and he a graduate of Eureka College—an increase of more than half a trillion dollars does not and cannot a deficit make. Despite the extra half a trillion dollars available during those years for funding growth in entitlement and discretionary spending, this growth, far above and beyond such a gargantuan sum, is what produced the deficit—not military spending, not tax cuts, and not the reasonable Reagan budgets that were dead

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on arrival in Democratic Congresses.

Given that Mr. Reagan's critics are those for whom a "cut" can mean a rate of growth slower than the one they propose, they may protest that the increase in funds available as a result of the two Reagan policies they condemn was actually a decrease because it might have been greater. By this logic they would run the government, and by this logic often they do.

Second, in regard to what they derisively call "Star Wars" (something as piggish and uncivil as if conservatives persistently referred not to "welfare" but to "Welfare Cadillac"), they believe that Reagan understood nothing but false simplicities and was incapable of grasping their authoritative refutations. These refutations, however, an instant academic orthodoxy, were forged with only one side speaking, and as such became a perpetual spring of untenable arguments the chief virtue of which has been repetition.

They believed that though a strategic defense was not workable the Soviets would react as if it were, and thus that theirs was the task of curing benighted world leaders of inflammatory delusions. As mechanical challenges were met and kinetic intercepts accomplished, SDI opponents took refuge in their conviction that the computational power of the middle '80s was insufficient for guidance and battle management. Given the simple alternative of dividing the watched sky into as many sectors as were necessary to reduce the load on appropriately duplicated systems, it was not insufficient then, and it certainly is not now, after computational power has advanced by orders of magnitude. Retrenching, they assert that countermeasures will always foil an anti-missile system, that the offense is always superior to the defense. Military history, however, consists of the alternating successes of the one over the other, and as nothing less than survival may be at stake, it is the responsibility of statesmen to remain in the competition of move and countermove.

But the heart of their case, still seldom refuted, was their claim that a missile shield would allow the U.S. a first strike, therefore destabilizing the strategic balance and pushing the Soviets toward preemption. What they missed, however, and still miss, is that though the shield could never be impervious enough to tempt whoever wielded it to begin a nuclear war, it could be impervious enough nonetheless to protect the bulk of American missiles and thus ensure that no first strike against the United States could succeed—thus not threatening but increasing nuclear force stability. At the same time, such a full-scale system would offer a high degree of protection in case of a general nuclear exchange, and a near-perfect defense against accidental launches or nuclear-armed missiles flying from the rogue nations that eventually would possess them.

These two accusations, unless they are forced into the light, are the sharp rock upon which Ronald Reagan's historical reputation will founder even as it floats on a sea of encomiums. Their tremendous power arises from the fact that those who trade in them and those who credulously receive them have neither the ability nor the inclination to delve into the arcana of national accounts or nuclear strategy. Their existence means that it is not enough to remember the 40th president with pride and affection, for he is still under assault, and still must be defended, even in the hour of his death. **NR**

The Secret of His Success

DINESH D'SOUZA

REAGAN was, in many respects, an ordinary man. One cannot say of Reagan, as one can say of Washington, Lincoln, or Churchill, that he possessed qualities so rare and outstanding that they evidently qualified him for greatness.

Yet the 1980s were an extraordinary period in world history. Inflation was subdued. The energy crisis came to an abrupt halt, and gas prices plummeted. After a period of stagnation and recession, the economy turned around and went into a juggernaut of growth. The Dow Jones average tripled. The silicon revolution began its transformation of the way we live and work. The Berlin Wall came crashing down, and the Soviet

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reagan remembered

BILL FITZPATRICK/WHITE HOUSE

"When I was representing President Reagan through the entire Iran-Contra matter, because the independent counsel Lawrence Walsh was interested in having access to the presidential diaries, I spent many days reading every entry he made. He kept a diary throughout the eight years of his presidency as a way to keep in touch with day-to-day details. In the diary, I read about the days before his first summit with Gorbachev in Geneva. He wrote about the fact that he was going to try to talk to Gorbachev alone, which turned out to be the famous 'walk in the woods' that may ultimately have changed the course of history. He planned to approach Gorbachev alone, as a human being, to talk about issues of nuclear weapons and nuclear annihilation. He felt that there was a way they could communicate together and deal with those problems. And it turned out just that way. The idea that Ronald Reagan just showed up and went through the motions was completely contradicted by what was actually going on. He actually planned that out. He wrote about it before it happened in his diary."

—THEODORE OLSON

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empire began to crumble.

One, maybe two, of these outcomes can be attributed to chance. But all of them? These were the results that Reagan intended. In many cases, he repeatedly predicted what would happen. He implemented policies to bring it about. And he achieved his desired result. The big question is not whether Reagan did these things, but how. How did an apparently ordinary fellow generate the extraordinary events that occurred during his presidency?

The secret of Reagan's success was that throughout his career he pursued his convictions with bold disregard for the two most powerful forces in politics: the American people and the elites.

Today's politicians are obsessed with what the American people think. They instruct their pollsters, "Go and find out the views of the American people, so that we can choreograph our positions to bring them into line with public sentiment." Undoubtedly many of them believe that this is a marvelous demonstration of democracy in action.

January 28, 1991

Reagan, however, knew that we live in a representative democracy where the American people choose leaders, and it is the leader's job to lead. In many cases this means taking action without consulting the people. Many times during the 1980s Reagan came on television and said something like, "My fellow Americans, I have just signed an executive order removing gasoline price controls." Or, "My fellow Americans, yesterday I bombed Libya."

In other words, Reagan typically did something, then told us why he did it, and he asked for our support. So Reagan did seek the approval of the American people, but not necessarily prior to pursuing a course of action. In some cases, however, Reagan recognized that he would not get such support, at least not right away. At those times Reagan was willing to endure short-term public opposition in order to vindicate a longer-term objective.

Although Reagan was willing to brave widespread public discontent, he was not willing to brave it indefinitely. "Stay the course," he told the American people during the recession in his first term. He was appealing to patience and assuring citizens that his policies would work. But Reagan was determined that his policies should be vindicated, not 20 years hence, but by 1984. He understood that an elected leader does himself no good if he is voted out of office and his opponent comes in and undoes all his efforts. Thus, in a democracy, it is imperative that one's central objectives be met by the next election. Fortunately, the economy turned around in 1983, and then went into such a gallop that the 1984 election became a non-event.

Another key to Reagan's success was his willingness to ignore the wise men, the elites. Many Reagan wannabes—Newt Gingrich, Jack Kemp—have ruined their careers in part because they fancied themselves intellectuals, and thus craved the accolades of the intelligentsia. Reagan, by contrast, couldn't care less whether the *New York Times* editorial page deplored his policies. This indifference to the intimidation of elites gave Reagan enormous freedom to go where his convictions led him.

When Reagan wanted to cut taxes and boost defense spending, his own advisers warned that he would produce massive deficits. Reagan retorted that he wanted to balance the budget, but not at the expense of his tax program or his defense program. Amazingly, the wise men of both parties proved to be wrong and Reagan was proven right. Contrary to the warnings of countless economists and editorialists, the deficit did no measurable harm to the economy, and in the late '90s it simply disappeared.

Reagan was willing to go against the polls, and take on the elites—these were crucial elements of his success. As the economy roared into recovery in the mid-'80s, Reagan, who always faced challenges with grace and humor, addressed his critics: "The best sign that our economic program is working is that you don't call it Reaganomics anymore." **NR**

At His Side

EDWIN MEESE III

One day, during the height of the furor over the Iran-Contra matter, I was alone with President Reagan, and I decided to ask him about it in a way I hadn't before.

Having worked with him for nearly three decades, I felt I was as close personally to the president as anyone besides Nancy. And I could sense some strain. It bothered him tremendously that people had used the events to impugn his credibility. It bothered him, too, that he had to dismiss those involved. Ronald Reagan hated to fire anyone. And it bothered him that all of this seemed to be holding back the country.

So I finally said to him, "I hope this isn't getting you down." "Don't be concerned, Ed," he replied. "Nancy worries enough for both of us."

This was Ronald Reagan in a nutshell. Disarming yet strong, and always concerned about the well-being of others. More importantly, it demonstrated a characteristic shared by truly great leaders—he could see over the next hill. He knew the storm would pass and things would get better. This was part of the genius of our 40th president.

From the time I joined his staff in Sacramento in 1967 to oversee legal, crime, and judicial issues, until Alzheimer's forced him from public view, I never once remember Ronald Reagan losing his temper with those who served him, even when they disappointed him.

Ronald Reagan never expressed hard feelings even toward John Hinckley, the man who shot him and three others outside the Washington Hilton in 1981. The bullet lodged an inch from his

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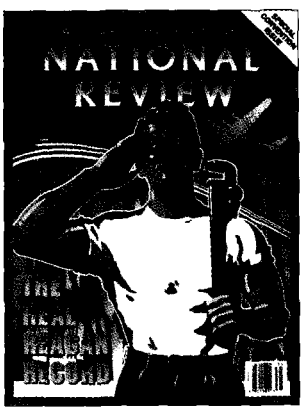
heart, and the most I heard him say about it was, "God must have spared me for a reason." His good-natured response to that crisis was vintage Reagan: He was graceful while literally under fire.

To work for Ronald Reagan, you had to know that comity was the standard. Every morning, the president received a security briefing, attended by the national security adviser, Vice President Bush, and two or three top aides. The agenda seemed to consist of one difficult and discouraging item after another. But every day, as the meeting ended, President Reagan told a joke and everyone walked out laughing. It was his way of reassuring us that we would overcome any challenge, no matter how dire it seemed. I've often wondered what the people sitting outside those meetings thought after seeing the leader of the free world and his top assistants walk out of a meeting about the most serious business of the nation laughing—every day.



August 31, 1992

It was the same at cabinet meetings. When tension mounted, President Reagan would reach toward the middle of the table, grab his jar of jellybeans, pull out a few, and pop them in his mouth. Then he'd pass them around the table, and everyone would take a few. It was hard to stay mad at people when you were chomping on jellybeans, and he knew it.

Ronald Reagan had an endless store of tales, often about Hollywood. His less friendly biographers have used this to suggest that he wasn't a serious person. This completely misses the mark: President Reagan's wit was part of his management style, and he used it to keep up confidence and morale. His genius was that he knew precisely when to use humor, and how.

The president also had a unique feel for when to accept half a loaf from Congress, rather than, as he said, "ride off the cliff with full flags flying." He never forgot his objectives, and he mastered the art of achieving them in stages.

His lack of guile, and his sincere commitment to those objectives, enabled him to establish a rapport with people in a way few political leaders ever have—and this paid huge dividends for the country. These qualities forged, for example, the bonds of his special relationship with Margaret Thatcher. But they are best illustrated by his relationship with Mikhail Gorbachev. Reagan's sincerity seemed to remove from Gorbachev the inherent distrust Soviet politicians had of Americans, and probably shaped, at least in part, Gorbachev's reaction to the implosion of the Soviet Union.

President Reagan was genial, yet tied tightly to his convictions. Gorbachev arrived at the 1986 summit in Reykjavik prepared to offer whatever cuts in Soviet weapons it would take to convince President Reagan to drop the Strategic Defense Initiative. To Ronald Reagan, SDI—safeguarding America from nuclear attack—was a core principle. He was ready to walk away from an arms deal rather than capitulate. And walk away he did.

Above all else, Ronald Reagan believed in God and country—beliefs he shared with our nation's Founders. He believed America had a purpose, which was to promote liberty, humanity, and prosperity for people across the globe. And in the end, this was the formula for peace. This was why President Reagan sought public office, and why he was enormously successful. He revived the American spirit, which he knew was suffering under the burden and consequences of big government. He unleashed American know-how by slashing tax rates and regulations, resulting in unprecedented economic growth. He rebuilt our military after years of neglect, ensuring American security and foreign-policy objectives, including the once-unimaginable dissolution of the Soviet Union. And he did all of it with his trademark wink, and a joke, and smile from ear to ear.

Ronald Reagan was a great man, and my great friend. I will miss him. **NR**

My President, Way Back

CHARLTON HESTON

RONALD REAGAN was my president before he was yours. This was long before the governorship and the presidency; his film career was already over but he was still president of the Screen Actors Guild. We were then facing the first strike in our history, and the studios were determined not to give us the health and welfare plans we were aiming for, nor the residual payments for films and reruns.

"I'll be with you through this strike, I promise you," he said. "We'll win this one; I promise you that, too. But then I'll resign, and you should know that, of course." To my surprise, he appointed me to the board, and put me on the negotiating committee as well. I decided it was something I should do. Of course I was a green hand at negotiating then, but I had a good teacher.

Strike negotiations are no fun. Arguing for hours on end, waiting for the other side to give a little, keeping a relaxed and confident front in the midst of endless disputes, sitting over cups of cold coffee with your shoes off while the other guys are caucusing—definitely a miserable way to spend the night. Playing on that field for the first time, I was stunned by Reagan's negotiating skills. Hearing out a fierce assault from the studio people, he'd smile and say, "Yes, that's a very good point indeed. But let me just say this . . . ," and undercut them completely.

After a particularly arduous session, I walked into my own house at about 4 A.M. My wife Lydia wakened enough to ask me, "How did it go, Charlie?"

"It's hard to tell, honey," I replied, rolling into bed. "We've got a long way to go. But I'll tell you one thing: We've got a leader."

Mr. Heston is an Academy Award-winning actor and former president of the National Rifle Association.

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So we did, as the rest of the country would learn before long. He kept his promise to the Guild, gaining for us the best pension and welfare plan in organized labor. He was also responsible, I think, for my succeeding him as SAG president. I held the job longer than he, but didn't do it as well.

I saw little of him in the next year or so, as he geared up for the governor's race, though I recall seeing on TV one of the most disastrous campaign blunders in the history of politics. The incumbent governor, Edmund "Pat" Brown, was extolling his own skills in office as opposed to Reagan's inadequacy as a mere actor. "Remember," he said gravely, "it was an actor who killed Lincoln." "And that, sir," I said to Lydia, "just cost you the election." (That may not have been literally true, but over the next ten or twelve years, an awful lot of actors voted for one of their own.)

When his two terms as governor were over, his campaign for the White House was already well under way. I did a couple of campaign stops with him, but I was only along for the ride. In my experience, every president, in the end, elects himself. Certainly Reagan did. He was an enormously charismatic figure, irresistibly likable—arguably the most impressive man in American politics since FDR.

During this time, Lydia and I had our share of White House dinners. (No, even hardy D.C. veterans don't turn them down.) I did a month at the Kennedy Center, acting in and directing *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*. The president and Nancy attended, then came onstage after the curtain calls and met every member of a very large cast. I know, this is the kind of chore presidents are supposed to do; Reagan just did it better. He was not a great actor, but he understood the *idea* of performance, and its function in the presidency.

Incidentally, he appointed me chairman of a commission examining the role of the arts and humanities in American culture. It was widely assumed, especially by the Left, that our mission was to dismantle the national endowments for the arts and humanities—but the two dozen or so members of the commission came to agree with me that the agencies, despite their problems, were meeting their responsibilities.

Reagan launched and ended every one of his campaigns for office in San Diego; I was asked to take part in a rally there the day before the 1984 election. It was the final rally he would ever attend on his own behalf. The program was the appropriate mix of country-western, comics, talk, and fireworks (both black powder and rhetorical). The audience response to the president was volcanic; it made the Rolling Stones' audience sound like the polite patter of applause for a harpist at a tea dansant. Milling around in the backstage crowd, I ran into Nancy Reagan, who offered me a lift to L.A. in Air Force One. I doubt that many people decline that invitation; I certainly didn't.

Air Force One took off from a military facility and was covered en route by four F-14s. It was full of very tired people, at the end of an exhausting campaign. Meese, Deaver, Baker—all looked at the end of their energies. Not President Reagan. He was in high spirits, glowing with health; I do believe he could've undertaken another campaign the next day.

The next day was the election. A few months earlier Nancy Reagan had expressed some anxieties to me about the result. So I asked Jim Baker, who'd run the campaign, "Well, what does it look like for tomorrow?"

"Oh, we'll lose the District of Columbia, probably Minnesota, too. We'll take everything else." I was stunned. "What do you mean, 'everything else'?" "We'll win all the rest of the United States."

And so it proved. **NR**

reagan remembered

"For the last three years, we've been digging into his papers, and what we're finding is dramatic. He worked all the time. Every time we thought he had gone to bed, he was up there, at his desk in his bedroom, reading and writing and working. And he was incredibly smart. Every time we heard this 'Aw, shucks' thing, it was about something that he had thought through and analyzed. When we worked with him, we knew he was terrific, and we liked him a lot, but we never knew how good he was. I remember traveling with him in the 1970s, when he was doing daily radio commentaries. I always assumed that Peter Hannaford was writing them, but when Nancy Reagan opened up the private boxes at the Library—the ones the government archivists don't have any control over—we found hundreds of handwritten documents, 680 of them, that he had written, every day. He analyzed everything from Africa to missile defense, to welfare, you name it. And then there are the letters. So far, we have found 6,500 letters, incredible letters, to everyone from John Wayne to Gorbachev. And you think, how the hell did he do it? And the only answer is, he worked all the time."

—MARTIN ANDERSON

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The Gipper And the Tipper

CHRIS MATTHEWS

I HELD a unique vantage point on Ronald Reagan. For six years I was top aide to Speaker of the House Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, otherwise known as Ronald Reagan's No. 1 rival. Before that I was a presidential speechwriter for Jimmy Carter, the man he beat to win the White House.

I first met President Reagan himself in the Speaker's ceremonial office. It was the president's "holding room" for the 1982 State of the Union. "Welcome, Mr. President, to the room where we plot against you!" I said. "Not after six," he answered without a second's hesitation. "The Speaker says that here in Washington we're all friends after six."

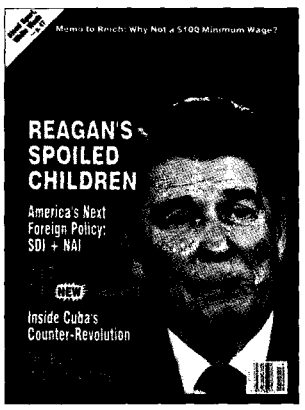
Yes, it really happened that way. As the Speaker's aide, I was that wise a guy, and Ronald Reagan was that masterful in taking command.

Reagan was a tougher, more on-guard character than the guy you'd figure from his breezy public personality—more Jimmy Cagney than Jimmy Stewart. The Ronald Reagan I met in the Speaker's room was the guy who had survived his divorce from Jane Wyman, the decline of his movie career, the cancellation of his TV show, and the cruel social downgrading that rides shotgun on such defeats.

People forget: Reagan defeated Bobby Kennedy in debate. He was the political street fighter who got up off the dirt to win the 1976 North Carolina primary when nearly everybody counted him for dead. He was the cold-blooded gladiator who strode to the podium of that year's Republican convention and delivered such a barn-burner it made people wonder what Gerald Ford, the party nominee, was doing on the stage.

Like millions who watched television in the 1950s, I had gotten to know and like Reagan during his eight years hosting the old *General Electric Theater*. To me back then, Ronald Reagan was simply the guy I shared my Sunday evenings with. And talk about an audience. In its fourth year on the air, the 1956-57 season, *GE Theater* was the No. 3-rated show on television. For many years, it was the No. 1 show in its time slot.

From the beginning, Reagan was a man with a cause. I remember the time he opened *GE Theater* by saying that the story he was about to introduce mattered to him "personally." It concerned a woman who had been hoodwinked into joining a Communist front group. Let's face it: Every cab driver knew that Reagan wanted to beat the Communists abroad and to cut government and taxes at home.



May 6, 1996

In 1980 the GOP nominated him for president. He asked the convention, "Can anyone look at the record of this administration and say, 'Well done?' Can anyone compare the state of our economy when the Carter administration took office with where we are today and say, 'Keep up the good work!'? Can anyone look at our reduced standing in the world today and say, 'Let's have four more years of this'?"

As an aide to President Carter, I smelled trouble. We weren't running against a Republican: We were running against the Republic!

What were the secrets of Reagan's success? I can think of three strengths he carried with him into the political arena: One, he knew why he wanted to be president. Two, he knew how to talk to real people. And three, he could describe his feelings about our country by invoking the spirit most Americans share but have trouble expressing. When Reagan spoke about "the boys" who stormed Normandy or the astronauts lost in the *Challenger*, he tapped into the deepest sentiments of his compatriots. While he may never have fought in World War II, he evoked its aura with greater success than anyone who had ever lived on K rations. The only times he got into trouble as president were occasions when neither Communism nor big government came into play. The decision to deploy the Marines in Lebanon in 1982 and the arms-for-hostages deal of three years later were two situations in which his worldview failed him.

The troubling truth—and it's true of the best politicians—is that he was just as compelling when he was fudging the facts. Reagan could recount a scene from a movie as if it actually happened. He told Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Shamir and Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal that he had photographed the death camps for the Army Signal Corps when he'd merely screened, and perhaps helped to edit, the *film footage* of the liberation. It was a stunning experience to hear Ronald Reagan say so confidently, in his TV debate with Carter, what I knew to be untrue—that he had been an advocate of Medicare in its early days. But all most people remember from that evening was Reagan's put-away line: "There you go again." With those four withering words, the challenger reduced the incumbent to a desperate, sweating hack clinging to a great office he was no longer strong enough to fill. I think that the man who played George Gipp in *Knute Rockne: All American* never stopped trying to reinvent the forward pass. Why couldn't the bold play that won on the cinematic football field work on the U.S. economy? Instead of endless trench warfare over budget cuts, Reagan would surprise his rivals with some razzle-dazzle: a big tax cut. Instead of competing with the Soviets on how many missiles we could deploy at each other, he'd commission a missile shield that would render their missiles irrelevant.

Ronald Reagan did not "win" the Cold War but he belongs in the roster of those who did. That list began with President Harry Truman, who drew the line on Soviet expansion in Europe. It includes all the other Cold War presidents of both parties who contained Communism until it could destroy itself. What set Reagan apart in the Cold War was his insistence that there be a winner and a loser. **NR**

Mr. Matthews is host of MSNBC's *Hardball* and author of, among other books, *Now, Let Me Tell You What I Really Think*, from which this piece is adapted.

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One of Us

NEAL B. FREEMAN

RONALD REAGAN gave me the worst job I ever had. He awarded my firm a contract to produce his video appearances from the White House. I thought it was a dream assignment until the first time I sent a crew into the Oval Office. That's when it dawned on me. There were only two possible outcomes to every shoot: The public would whistle appreciatively, "That Reagan. What a great communicator!" Or they'd snarl, "Who did that to him? What's the name of that nitwit producer?" We considered it a small triumph that we managed to labor for years in fearful anonymity. The alternative was to find instant fame as the guys who managed to make Ronald Reagan look bad on television.

For all its high anxiety, the job had its moments. For openers, we got to hang out with the Leader of the Free World. We were under strict Jim Bakerly instructions to discuss only the shoot itself, no freelance "face time," in the phrase of the day. Fat chance. We chatted up the president on sports and comics and, finding him completely approachable, moved on to personnel, policies (where there was a distinction), and other radioactive matter. He had, as has been noted by another commentator or two, a winning personality.

On one of these occasions, I crossed that broad line between cheekiness and chutzpah and asked the president if he would attend the premiere of a film I was then finishing. It was called *Conservatives* and it was the kind of piece about which people tended to form strong opinions. Not to put too fine a point on it, the film was being trashed by the trendier media, and even the hint of a presidential endorsement would help me regain lost ground. Reagan listened to the request, gave me one of those nods, and said, "Would it be all right if I said a few words?" Only my Welsh genes restrained me from hugging the man.

Shortly before the great event, Reagan was diagnosed with colon cancer and underwent major surgery. He was sent to Camp David to recuperate, which meant that doctors, and Nancy, were controlling events. His condition was serious, whatever the press releases might be saying. I was frightened for Reagan and disappointed that my "Special Guest" would not be making an appearance at the Kennedy Center premiere. The morning of the event, as I was still scrambling to assemble the program, the Signal Corps called to ask whether they could string a line from Camp David into the theater: The president wanted to say a few words. I replied that they had my permission to dig up Pennsylvania Avenue from end to end.

On the way home that night, I told my wife that there may be few better feelings in life than sitting in front of 500 of your friends listening to the President of the United States tell them what a helluva guy you are.

I tell this story because, obviously, I like to tell this story. Who wouldn't? But I would be willing to bet that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people reading this page who had similar encounters with Ronald Reagan. Vivid, personal encounters that organized your impressions of the man and fixed them in your calculation for all time. He was always described by the media middlemen as the Great Communicator, a technician in the arcane field of mass persuasion. What those analyses always missed was that he built his circle of colleagues, and then his circle of admirers, one relationship at a time. Sure, he mastered television, but he used it only as a time-saving device: He still spoke to his listeners one by one. And when he did, we came to realize, it was only after he had listened carefully to what was on our minds.

Smart Washington used to make fun of Reagan's note writing and phone calling. He would send a check to a sick child, give a pep talk to an unemployed worker. He was a sucker for a hard-luck story. The smarties never seemed to figure out that he was one of *us*, and that he had no secret ambition to be one of *them*.

Think back to some of the moments that define your own memory of him. Foremost, perhaps, the assassination attempt. Breathes there an American boy who has not dreamed of taking a bullet for the flag? Who has not hoped against hope that, when the day came, he wouldn't whimper and feel a tear slide down his cheek? When Reagan was wheeled into the operating room, looked up at his doctors, and joked, "I hope you're all Republicans," he took the pressure off them, and then off us. He closed the emotional sale with the American public: He acted the way we hope we would act in that moment, and fear we wouldn't.

Or go back to his first turn on the political stage, his speech for Barry Goldwater on October 27, 1964. Goldwater is on the last lap of a landslide defeat. Reagan wants to make it clear that he stands with Goldwater, a clarity upon which few were then insisting. The rats had already checked out of their staterooms. Reagan strides onstage and rips through riffs on welfare, taxes, the Commies—and then says, directly to the camera: "You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We will preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we will sentence them to take the last step into a thousand years of darkness." You heard him: a rendezvous with destiny. Jimmy Carter could arrange a get-together, Bush a power breakfast, Clinton a bull session. But this was something *bigger*.

Or slip forward to January 28, 1986. The space shuttle *Challenger* has just exploded and awkward silence has fallen over every conversation in America. It is 5 P.M. here in the East and I happen to be holding the hand of my terrified 13-year-old daughter. Reagan scraps the State of the Union speech he had planned to deliver that night and, instead, goes live with this statement from the Oval Office: "And I want to say something to the schoolchildren of America who were watching the live coverage of the shuttle's takeoff. I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen. It's all part of the process of exploration and discovery. It's all part of taking a chance and expanding man's horizons. The future doesn't belong to the fainthearted; it belongs to the brave. The *Challenger*

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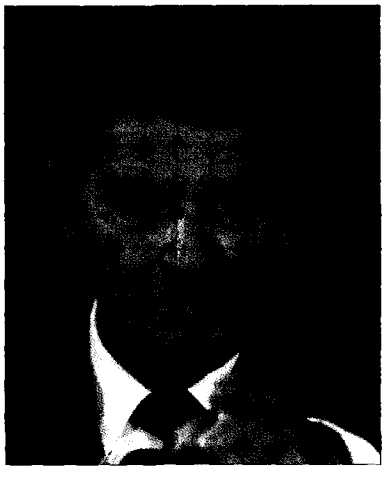
crew was pulling us into the future, and we'll continue to follow them." He said it for the rest of us.

And he did it again and again. As we fumbled for the words, he found them. As we sorted through our feelings, he felt them. By creating this intimacy between himself and his fellow citizens, he generated an extraordinary rhetorical power: He was the only public speaker of his time who could make grown men cry, with tears of patriotic joy. Ronald Reagan saw us Americans as heroes with a high calling. And for seeing us that way, we loved him. **NR**

reagan remembered

"When he was governor of California, he was holding a news conference in the press room at the state capitol when there were some Cesar Chavez people demonstrating outside the room. The governor's security man came to me and told me about it and said we should take him out the back way. I said fine, so after the press conference, I said, 'Governor, let's go out the back way.' We'd taken about ten steps and he said, 'Why are we going this way?' I said it was just another way to leave, and he said, 'No, why?' I said there were some demonstrators out there, and he said, 'Nobody stops me from walking anywhere in my capitol.' And he turned out and walked through this mob, which kind of parted like the Red Sea, and he strode back to his office."

—LYN NOFZIGER



CORBIS

The Great One

RUSH LIMBAUGH

It is said that greatness doesn't need to be explained. That's true for those paying attention. Sadly, most people's historical perspective traces back to the day they were born.

Millions of Americans under the age of 30 have no concrete memory of Ronald Reagan's presidency and yet benefit from his greatness. I would like to explain to them why—because the simple fact is that now, in death, Reagan once again defines the utter beauty and blessing that is America and reminds us all of our destiny.

His greatness does not reside in a single speech, or a single phrase, or a single memory. Reagan was great because he dared to embrace big ideas, to do big things, and to overcome big obstacles. He was great because he never gave up on his country. Most important, he never doubted the wisdom and judgment of the American people.

Some forget that in the late '70s and early '80s the Washington establishment—which Reagan would later call the Iron Triangle of media, special interests, and bureaucracy—was talking of America's inevitable decline. And rather than question their own role in bringing the nation to this point, the elites questioned the fortitude of the American people. Yet it was, after all, the establishment's failed policies and worldview that had led the nation into economic and international decline, not the people. And Reagan knew it.

After Jimmy Carter, the establishment questioned whether the presidency itself could survive and whether it was too big a job for any one man. Some wondered whether the Constitution should be changed to provide for a single six-year term.

Reagan would have none of the doom and gloom. He rejected Washington elitism and connected directly with the American people, who adored him. He brought vigor and confidence and humility to the presidency, all of which had been missing for years. This upset and confounded his political and media adversaries no end, and Reagan seemed to enjoy it.

Reagan rejected socialism and big government, and insisted on returning as much government to the people as possible. He slashed taxes so deeply that even some on his own staff became unbelievers. They were wrong, he was right. Reagan created the greatest economic expansion in American history. He wasn't always successful in cutting government programs, but he sure tried. Reagan rejected Communism, détente, and containment, and set us on a course to win—not manage—the Cold War, which I consider the final battle of the Second World War. He freed tens of millions of people who'd been imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain for nearly five decades. They survive him today.

In the mid-'90s, I attended a lecture given by Lady Thatcher at the Waldorf in New York. She made a point of saying that it was Ronald Reagan, not Mikhail Gorbachev, who brought down the Soviet Union, primarily by proposing SDI. Later, after Lady Thatcher became a friend, I often reminded her of this and she commanded me never to allow people to think otherwise. I recall a dinner in her honor at a private home in Manhattan where I was asked to give the toast. The guests were the usual Manhattan elites, and after Lady Thatcher's remarks, when the hostess asked for questions, there were none. So I rose and asked her who won the Cold War. She gave the same answer as in her lecture and the dinner guests sat in stone silence. They knew, but didn't want to hear it.

Reagan was also concerned about an all-powerful judiciary undermining the will of the people, and he attempted to do something about it. He spent eight years appointing people to the federal bench who were committed to interpreting the Constitution, not rewriting it. He appointed Antonin Scalia to the Supreme Court and elevated William Rehnquist to chief justice. The liberals are still trying to reverse Reagan's impact.

Lest we forget, Reagan was called many things by those who resented him: a cowboy, a dunce, a danger. Washington elites described his 49-state landslide in 1984 as

Mr. Limbaugh is the King of Radio.

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a "triumph of greed and selfishness." His entire presidency became known as the Decade of Greed by Democrats who today claim to admire him. He was accused of sexism, racism, and heartlessness. They said he was responsible for homelessness and AIDS. He was going to start World War III and destroy the social safety net. But he was none of these things, and did none of these things.

Reagan knew America and the American people better than anyone, especially those who sought to govern them from inside the Beltway. I will never forget the night in 1990 at the 21 Club (also in New York) when the men's-room attendant approached me and proudly related his experience of once meeting Reagan. He looked at me and said, "Mr. Limbaugh, he never got mad at them! He was brilliant." I often wonder what Ronald Reagan would say to us about this new war, the war against terrorism—including the liberation of Iraq. But then we need only listen to his words 20 years ago, when he spoke to the veterans and the world at the 40th anniversary of D-Day. He said, in part:

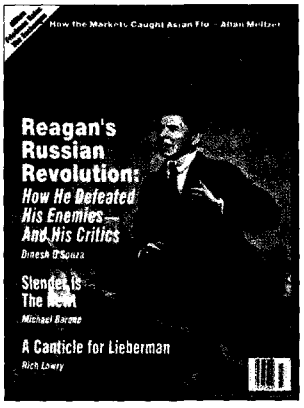
> . . . there is a profound moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest. You were here to liberate, not to conquer, and so you and those others did not doubt your cause. And you were right not to doubt.
>
> . . . We in America have learned bitter lessons from two world wars: It is better to be here ready to protect the peace than to take blind shelter across the sea, rushing to respond only after freedom is lost. We've learned that isolationism never was and never will be an acceptable response to tyrannical governments with an expansionist intent.

Reagan was right, as George W. Bush is right today. And I believe if President Reagan had been able, he would have put his hand on President Bush's shoulder and said to him, "Stay the course, George."

I never met Ronald Reagan. It was not necessary to have met him in order to love him, which I do. God bless Ronald Reagan, and God bless America. **NR**

A Name of My Own

JAY NORDLINGER



November 24, 1997

Of all the things Ronald Reagan did for me, maybe the best was that he gave me something to call myself. I am a Reaganite. It can be difficult to answer when someone says, "What are you, politically?" The word "conservative" is subject to a thousand interpretations. You don't want to launch into a lecture about the Scottish Enlightenment, the strange journey of the word "liberal," the advent of Frank Meyer, etc. So, instead you can say—if it's true—"I'm a Reaganite."

Everyone has an idea of what Reagan was: Some think of him as a mainstream conservative, others think of him as a right-winger, or as a genuine liberal, or as a Neanderthal—whatever. The point is, people know what you mean.

He had a view of America's place in the world, and of the place of government in America, and of what this republic should be. I share that view, wholly.

Although I wasn't destined to. I was born into a quite left-wing environment—Ann Arbor, Mich.—and Reagan's name was mud. Actually, it was sometimes "Ray-gun," ha, ha, a popular epithet in the early '80s. We're all supposed to love, or at least respect, Reagan now, so it's hard to convey just how hated he was when his career was live. The Left hates W. now, to be sure. They hated Reagan no less, trust me.

In my world, "conservative" meant bigot, warmonger, plutocrat, ignoramus . . . shall I go on? And Reagan was the worst of the conservatives. He was a "nuclear cowboy"—that was the phrase—and his superficial charm would hoodwink the American public into electing him. How could the voters throw out Jimmy Carter, pure, sweet Jimmy Carter, who read the Bible in Spanish and cared so much about human rights?

Rosalynn Carter said, about Reagan, "He makes us comfortable with our prejudices." Yeah, that was it.

Reagan's election was considered a national disaster in Ann Arbor. I was a sophomore in high school. After being sworn in, Reagan set about doing many shocking things, like cutting taxes ("for the rich") and challenging the Soviet Union. Why, he was the kind of guy who might even fire air-traffic controllers! (Reagan would say, "I didn't fire them—they quit." The union had vowed not to strike, you see.)

A pivotal day came on March 30, 1981, when Reagan—along with those three others—was shot. It was pivotal for me, that is. I was amazed by the grace and courage he showed in that situation. From then on, you couldn't tell me that he was an empty B-movie actor, with no substance whatsoever. I wouldn't believe it; he'd given the lie to it. I wasn't necessarily ready to agree with him—but I would listen to him.

And I did. I was a natural anti-Communist. That was caring about human rights too, wasn't it? Didn't the millions who lived under Communism have the same right to liberty and decency as Filipinos, South Africans, and Chileans? And, even at my leftest (which wasn't very left), I couldn't hate America. I knew that, as Donald Rumsfeld would later put it, "America is not what's wrong with the world."

But, oh, at my university, Reagan was what was wrong with the world. On the last day of one class, a history professor told us that he doubted we'd live into real adulthood, because Reagan, through his rejection of détente, would incinerate the world. And in the reelection year of 1984, the kids around me chanted, "Reagan, Bush, you can't hide, we charge you with genocide!" What they meant was that the administration had slowed the rate of growth of social-welfare spending.

Brick by brick, my entire edifice—never all that solid—fell. I opened my mind to free-market economics. And I could no longer believe—I don't think I ever believed—that abortion was merely

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a matter of a woman's sovereignty over her own body. The feminists had a slogan: "A fetus in a woman's womb has no more standing than a hamburger in her stomach." That slogan was repulsive to me.

If I hadn't liked Reagan so much, as a man, would I have swung around to his views? Probably—but it would have taken longer. There was his humor, his "security in his own skin," as everyone said. People wanted him to be embarrassed by his acting career, especially his role in *Bedtime for Bonzo*, in which he played alongside a chimp. But Reagan wasn't the least embarrassed. Someone gave him a still from that picture to sign—Reagan with Bonzo. He wrote, "I'm the one with the watch."

And I remember that a TV reporter, hugely frustrated with Reagan, yelled at him, as he was walking back into the White House, after some outdoor event, "Mr. President, do you think you have no responsibility whatsoever for the federal budget deficit?" (I am paraphrasing.) Reagan turned back, cocked his head, and said, "Well, I was once a Democrat."

And it was extremely important to me that Reagan had been a Democrat. I'd been one, too (in a way). Reagan would say, "I didn't leave the Democratic party; the Democratic party left me"—that wasn't quite true, for Reagan had moved significantly rightward, but it was partly true.

By the end of my college days, at least one classmate teasingly called me "Gip," short for "Gipper" (itself the nickname of George Gipp, whom Reagan had played). It will sound trite, but Reagan made me what I am today, politically (along with WFB and NATIONAL REVIEW, and Norman Podhoretz and *Commentary*). I will never forget him. He will always be my president. He shaped me, stamped me.

Later in life, when I got to know a lot of people who'd been around Reagan, I pumped them endlessly for stories, and they happily obliged. These stories are now mine, weirdly enough, as though I'd been there.

And I was, in a way—there in Reagan's America, when politics was hot, and when I was being forged. Reagan's greatness is as clear to me as Beethoven's. Even many who were his enemies concede that he was the right man at the right time. Frankly, friends, George W. Bush isn't so bad, either. **NR**

Two of A Kind

PETER ROBINSON

A SPEECHWRITER, I worked with my mind. My father worked with his hands, producing mechanical drawings for IBM. I graduated from Dartmouth and Oxford. He never attended college. I flourished in Washington, D.C. He always disliked big cities, once telling me how, as an aspiring artist at the Art Students League, he'd felt out of place in New York. I read a dozen magazines and half a dozen newspapers. He read *Reader's Digest* and the *Binghamton Evening Press*, and that was that. It made me uncomfortable to do so, but I just couldn't seem to help it. I looked down on him.

Ronald Reagan got me over it.

A journal entry, from May 2002: *As I toured the Reagan ranch today, I kept thinking of Dad. When my guide pulled up her Ford Explorer after the long climb up the mountain, I opened the door, got a whiff of the horses, and thought of the way Dad had loved horses since he was a boy. Then, when I saw the firewood piled next to the front door of the ranch house—a pile that Ronald Reagan split himself—I once again thought of Dad. How many hours had Dad spent splitting and stacking firewood himself every autumn? Inside the ranch house, I looked over the bookshelves—and yet again, I thought of Dad. I counted a couple of dozen works of popular fiction, including Larry McMurtry's* Lonesome Dove*; one book after another about horses; and a couple of pictorial histories of the Old West. If Dad had found himself trapped at the Reagan ranch with a few days on his hands, he'd have been perfectly happy to choose three or four of Reagan's books, then sit down and start reading.*

After showing me the ranch house, my guide took me up the hill to the big steel shed that served as a garage and tack barn. At the back of the garage stood Ronald Reagan's workbench, a simple wooden structure beneath a pegboard that held saws, hammers, screwdrivers, and other tools, each hung neatly in its place. I could scarcely believe it. Reagan's workbench was almost identical to Dad's. You could have dropped Ronald Reagan into our garage or my father into Ronald Reagan's steel shed, and, repairing a chair or fixing a drawer, either man would have been able to pull down the tools he needed almost without having to look.

Dad and Reagan were the same kind of men.

Although I found new parallels between Reagan and my father when I visited the Reagan ranch, I recognized plenty of similarities between them while I was still at the White House. Both had been born in the second decade of the 20th century, Reagan in 1911, my father in 1919. Both had grown up in modest circumstances, Reagan the son of a shoe salesman, my father the son of a man who spent much of his career hauling goods around the floor of a Sears, Roebuck warehouse. Both possessed a simple, straightforward Christian piety that they'd learned from their mothers.

Both had found themselves drawn to the arts, Reagan to acting, my father to painting. And both had remained citizens all their lives of what we would now call the Red America; decent, patriotic, low-brow in their tastes, men who loved a good joke, enjoyed the outdoors, and found themselves most at ease when working with their hands or engaging in hard physical labor.

All right, I thought. Maybe they *did* have a lot in common. But Reagan had become a star. My father? All he'd become was a working stiff. Was there anything my father had ever done that Reagan hadn't? Just one.

During World War II, he'd seen action. An incident that took place during Reagan's state visit to France in 1982 got me thinking about what my father's service meant.

Midway through a meeting at the am-

Mr. Robinson served as speechwriter and special assistant to President Reagan. He is a fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author of *How Ronald Reagan Changed My Life*, which will be available in paperback in August.

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bassador's residence, deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver stepped in to say that he'd just learned the French intended to award the president a decoration.

Reagan looked puzzled. "What decoration?"

"I think it's the *Croix de Guerre*," Deaver replied.

"The *Croix de Guerre*?" Reagan said, his face clouding. "But that's for bravery. All I ever did was fly a desk. We'd better get this straightened out right away. I couldn't possibly accept the *Croix de Guerre*."

Ambassador Evan Galbraith stepped out to talk to the French. "It's not the *Croix de Guerre* they'll be giving you after all," Galbraith said, returning to the meeting. "It's the *Légion d'Honneur*."

"What for?" Reagan asked, puzzled once again.

"Statesmanship," Galbraith replied.

Reagan relaxed. Then he tightened the knot in his tie and grinned.

"Statesmanship?" he said. "I can play that role."

Amusing though it was, the incident gave me pause. If Reagan felt such profound respect for men who had been exposed to the dangers of battle, I thought, maybe I'd better reconsider my father's own wartime experience. For some three years he'd performed duty that I now saw must have proven harrowing. A boiler tender on the *Roger B. Taney*, he worked deep in the ship. That would have been a bad location if a torpedo or kamikaze had ever hit—and during the Battle of Okinawa, I learned when I did some research, the *Taney* had sounded general quarters 119 times in just 45 days. In my father's place, I'd have spent every moment frightened of finding myself trapped. That would have been the wrong fear. The pipes in the boiler room were wrapped with asbestos. Thirty years after the war, my father had lost part of a lung to asbestosis.

A working stiff? If Ronald Reagan had known about my father's service when they met, then the president would have given my father his crispest salute.

A scene comes to mind. The president and Mrs. Reagan are working their way through the East Room during a Christmas reception, shaking the hands of a couple of hundred people. Just as Reagan clasps my father's hand in both of his, someone behind my father asks Reagan a question—something about taxes, as I recall—and Reagan, still clasping my father's hand, answers the question at length, talking for half a minute before he finally finishes, drops my father's hand, and continues down. I can still see my father, gazing at Reagan with a look of awe, scarcely able to believe he was shaking hands with the president of the United States. That look on my father's face, I used to think, was funny—another manifestation of his squareness. Now what I see in that look is the awe I feel for my father himself. **NR**

reagan remembered

"Back when he was governor, Reagan always went home reasonably early. He didn't believe in hanging around the office for the sake of hanging around the office. One time, about 5:00, he was on his way out when he stuck his head in our office and said, 'Fellas, go home to your wives and daughters.' We said, 'If we do, who's going to do the work?' And he said, 'It doesn't need to get done. Go home.' And I've always thought that he was right, that much of the work of government doesn't need to get done."

—LYN NOFZIGER

GETTY

A Unique Subject

LOU CANNON

RONALD REAGAN was a tough nut for his biographers to crack. While his public policies were rarely a mystery, except to those who made them so, he was among the most private of men: reserved almost to the point of shyness behind his amiable demeanor. To make matters more difficult for a biographer seeking an original story, Reagan had constructed a compelling and romantic version of his life from which he saw no need to deviate.

I learned this early. In 1968, when I was a young reporter in Sacramento for the *San Jose Mercury News*, I obtained a contract to do a dual biography of Reagan and his Democratic rival, the powerful Assembly Speaker, Jesse (Big Daddy) Unruh. Reagan was the bright, new conservative governor; Unruh one of the greatest of wheeler-dealers. I didn't understand either of them, and my hope was that I could get below the surface by writing a book.

At this time, in the autumn of 1968, Reagan was campaigning across the country for Republican candidates in a private plane. It was explained to me by the governor's aides that Reagan would have more time for me if I accompanied him on the plane than he would in Sacramento. These same aides later confessed that they liked the arrangement because Reagan was afraid of flying—his contract with General Electric had specified he travel by train—and they thought it would be desirable to keep him in conversation while airborne.

So off we flew. On a long flight across the country, Reagan was courteous and responsive. He told witty stories, often at his own expense, and displayed a natural charm that I came to realize was an outer manifestation of his lack of vanity. But something was missing. One night in a hotel I went over my material and realized

Mr. Cannon is the author, most recently, of *Governor Reagan: His Rise to Power.*

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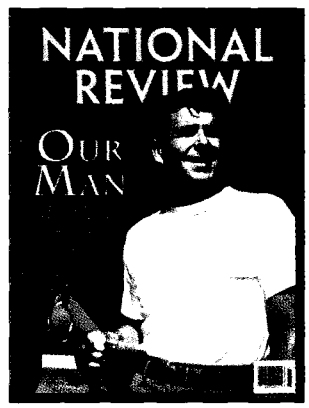
the problem: Reagan was re-telling me the precise accounts he had given in his 1965 autobiography, *Where's the Rest of Me?*, written by an experienced writer from material dictated by Reagan.

Mildly desperate, I confronted Reagan with this discovery the next day. He was unfazed. Cocking his head and with a quizzical look, he asked, "You want something new, Lou?" Yes, I said. He nodded. And that day, tucked away amidst his memorized accounts, was a nugget of new information. And it didn't stop. In every subsequent interview—more than a hundred—that I held with him during the rest of his life, Reagan gave me some similar nugget, usually only one. Reagan made his interviewers work, but he was a man of his word. I never needed to ask for "something new" again.



October 25, 1999

When *Ronnie and Jesse: A Political Odyssey* was published in 1969, the reviews were mostly kind, but I wasn't satisfied. While I felt I'd done fairly well explaining Unruh, who was not himself an open book, Reagan remained elusive. So after years of writing about him for the San Jose papers and then the *Washington Post*, I decided to try again. Reagan, then president-elect, learned about it.

"I hear you're going to do another book on me," he said to me.

"Yes, Governor [as we still called him], I'm going to keep writing about you until I get it right," I said.

"Good line," said Reagan, flashing a smile.

After five books on Reagan, it's for others to judge if I ever did get it right. But I did learn in time to appreciate him as a person and to understand that his early life was no bed of roses. In a May 5, 1989, interview, the "something new" from Reagan was a story about his father, who, like mine, was an Irish-American and an alcoholic. When Reagan was a sports announcer in Des Moines in the mid-1930s, his mother took the train from Dixon, Ill., to visit him. She told him that his father was drinking again and asked for help.

Reagan, a good son, wrote a letter to his father urging him to quit drinking. "I told him I had the same problem, and I thought it might help him that he could set an example for me," Reagan said. Reagan never had a drinking problem. More than 50 years later he remembered feeling he had done "something kind of dishonest" for telling his father a falsehood.

It is said that a biographer should love his subject but not too much, and that's the case with me. Reagan and I didn't talk much about personal stuff, for he didn't like to, but he was more curious than he appeared to be and once asked me if the fact we both had alcoholic fathers had anything to do with my interest in him. I didn't know.

What I do know is that Ronald Reagan reached out to people, including me, when they were in distress. He was close to his mother, and I to mine. When my mother died after a long illness, he called me from the White House to offer condolences. I told him I thought I'd been prepared for it.

"You are never prepared for the death of your mother," Reagan said.

Wise man. Great comforter. He always rose to the occasion. **NR**

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The Campaigner

RICHARD BROOKHISER

In January 1980 Ronald Reagan stumbled when George H. W. Bush won the Iowa caucuses. Reagan's immediate target after his loss was the New Hampshire primary, but in those more spacious days he had weeks of cross-country campaigning to fill. In that interval, I followed him on a swing for NATIONAL REVIEW that ended up in St. Paul, Minn. He was giving his stump speech at some downtown hall—ethnic? Masonic?—and for the longest time he didn't come to the stage. The band played "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," coolly. The sight of plastic boaters with campaign bumper stickers pasted on their crowns, atop the heads of people who are waiting, and waiting, to cheer, is one the most melancholy in the world.

I trust I will not shock the readers of this magazine, or the gods of journalistic objectivity, when I say that I was yearning for him to pull it out. His mighty effort to unseat Gerald Ford in 1976, a hair-raising alternation of wins and losses, had consumed the spring of my junior year in college. The 1980 campaign had been elaborately planned and funded; if he failed now, he would never run again (he was 69, after all). One of Minnesota's Republican senators, elected after some fluke spat in the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party, finally introduced Reagan, lukewarmly. Then he appeared. I felt what I always felt at the beginning of every Reagan speech: *Who is this guy?*

Actors, one thinks, are fluent. They are not supposed to flub their lines (*Now is the winter of our discount . . . discontent*). But Reagan often made little word bobbles of this kind. His good looks and physicality had gone beyond paternal to being grand-paternal; his warm voice had become husky around the edges, and his manner could seem a tad old-hennish. But at the end of his speech, I felt what I always felt: *I love him.*

Part of it was technique. He had a way,

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February 27, 2004

Mr. Jack Fowler
National Review
215 Lexington Avenue
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Dear Mr. Fowler:

My gratitude to you and Mr. Buckley and all those whose devoted labor has given new life to Old Treasures – and help young and old to recapture the Wonder.

Last May I ordered two copies of the Treasury of Classic Children's Literature (so happy to receive first editions), one for me and one for my grandsons, Jonathan, age 10, and Jordan, age 7, which I gave to them for Christmas. And this is what happened: While the rest of the family went about opening other presents Jonathan stole away into a quiet corner of the living room and wasn't heard from until his parents announced that it was time to go home. He put the book down long enough to put on his coat, and while the rest of the family exchanged farewells, Jonathan read. When I shook his hand to say good-bye (he is not given to demonstrative affection) – the book in his left hand, index finger serving as bookmark – I asked him what story he was reading; he opened the book to Tom Sawyer Abroad. For a moment I thought he will want to skip Scout Meetings and Sunday School and rush through things that require diligence. But in such matters his parents have no mercy. Needless to say, his enthusiasm was my joy.

Now I think the children are ready for more. So today I am ordering two copies of Thornton Burgess' Bedtime Stories. When I called your office Mr. Jenkins gave me the good news that you still offer the first copy for $29.95 and the second for $24.95. And shipping is still FREE (what a deal!). I have enclosed my check for $54.90.

Again, my Thanks for taking children of a new generation "on a most happy voyage back to the Golden Age of children's literature – a most innocent time...", that will serve to "promote those virtues and lessons that are increasingly at a premium in our culture." How right you are.

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(Mrs.) Waltraud Nicks

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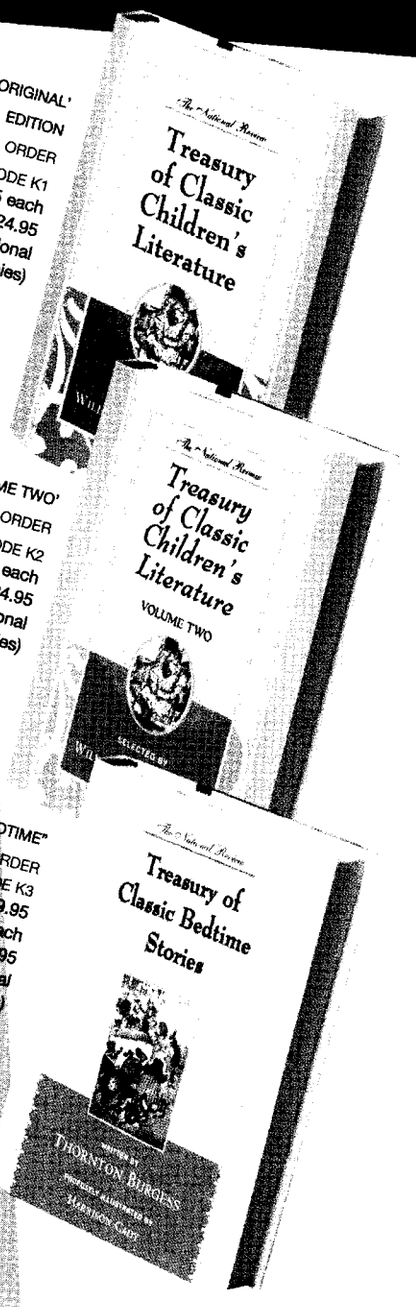

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to which his verbal fumbles contributed, of drawing back from the theoretical center of attention that hovers over every lectern. This had the effect of drawing the listener forward—closer to him. We needed to catch what was going on, so we brought our ears closer to his lips. Reagan had the confidence of a speaker long used to mikes. A politician like poor Walter Mondale would add, to the curse of an ugly accent, the vocal projection of a man used to addressing outdoor crowds. This made him charming as a splitting maul. Reagan, trained in radio stages and sound stages, was inviting as old flannel.

But let us never forget that the core of his attraction was what he said. Reagan's success cannot be appreciated apart from understanding the background of the Seventies, and the Seventies were awful. Pipsqueak sheiks had learned how to strangle us at the gas pump; the Ayatollah Khomeini promised something new, and worse. Inflation and unemployment, violating every model from Keynes to Milton Friedman, rose in inglorious tandem. The fall of Saigon had brought skull mountains to Cambodia, and restaurants to Arlington. The Soviets had not only conquered Afghanistan, which was on their border, but had acquired, through clever use of surrogates, improbable real estate in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. The presidency had passed from a crook to a dullard to a meager whiner. Henry Kissinger, the most brilliant of our foreign-policy mandarins, conceived of himself as playing the losing hand of the West with Machiavellian skill.

We needed an optimist, someone who knew that the right should, and would, prevail. Even more, we needed someone who knew what the right was. We needed someone who believed, not because he had learned it at the University of Chicago, but because it made sense to him, that lower taxes and fewer regulations would stimulate economic growth. We needed someone who knew, not because a geopolitical map-folder suspected it was true, but because he felt it in his bones, that Communism was evil and dangerous and inhuman.

That is what Ronald Reagan had been saying for years, before he said it again in St. Paul. Even if he didn't make the case in detail, which he usually didn't, he could allude to the case as his fulcrum, his political point of vantage. He had been saying such things at least since his speech for Goldwater in 1964. In 1980, when America needed him most, it turned to him. He won New Hampshire, the election, an intellectual argument, and a world war. He was probably not surprised—which was one of the reasons he ultimately won. **NR**

The Gift of Humor

WILLIAM A. RUSHER

RONALD REAGAN's famously relaxed personality was, of course, one of his biggest assets. He had a wonderful gift for making people feel at ease in his presence. And one of his favorite means of doing so was to tell a joke.

Jokes, of course, can take many forms. Some people build them right into their conversational style—the biting remark, the sarcastic aside, etc. Reagan's conversations, and even his speeches, were never biting, let alone sarcastic, though he enjoyed poking gentle fun at his opponents.

There was, for example, his story of the fellow who was invited to a costume party, but didn't know what costume to wear. "Finally he just slapped some egg on his face and went as a liberal economist." And then there was the Russian who bought a car, and was told it would be delivered ten years from the purchase date. "Morning or afternoon?" he inquired. "What does it matter?" asked the salesman.

"The plumber is coming in the morning."

He was equally capable of poking fun at himself—and sometimes the humor seemed aimed at the situation in general. In one early presidential press conference, he was confronted with evidence that the White House had contradicted itself on some point. "I will admit," he conceded, "that around the White House it sometimes seems as if the right hand doesn't know what the far right hand is doing."

Jokes were the solvent with which he laced his conversations. They didn't necessarily have to illustrate a point (though, then again, they might); often they simply afforded a moment's rest in the midst of a tense discussion. They were never sharply edged, or uncomfortably barbed. Most commonly they were anecdotes about

Mr. Rusher, NR's former publisher, is a syndicated columnist.

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believable situations, with an unexpected and hilarious punch line.

His public addresses almost always included touches of humor, deployed in aid of the political point he was making. His description of the federal government as a squalling infant was unforgettable: "A ravenous appetite at one end and no sense of responsibility at the other."

And then there was his description of the average hippie: "He acts like Tarzan, dresses like Jane, and smells like Cheetah."

His private conversations brimmed with wonderful jokes that, for one reason or another, were unsuitable for public use (though they were never in the least "improper"). One of the best was about the cardinal who came to the Pope.

"Some good news and some bad news," the cardinal said. "First, the good news: Christ has returned to earth. God walks again among men."

"Well!" said the Pope. "After that, what news could be bad?"

To which the cardinal replied, "The call came from Salt Lake City."

But my personal favorite was the one about the United Way canvasser who called on the very wealthy—and notoriously stingy—Mr. Jones.

"Mr. Jones," he began, "our records indicate that you have never given so much as a cent to the United Way."

"Oh?" replied Mr. Jones. "And do they also indicate that I have an elderly mother with no independent means of support?"

"Well, no," the canvasser admitted.

"Do they indicate that I have a brother who has been a quadriplegic since the Vietnam War?" "No."

"Do they indicate I have a sister whose husband deserted her and their five children after 20 years of marriage?" Again, "No."

"Well," concluded Mr. Jones with a chuckle, "if I don't do anything for them, what makes you think I'm going to do anything for you?"

And the chuckle would be right there, in the final line.

Which brings me to perhaps the most important point of all: Ronald Reagan was an actor, and told jokes superbly. His timing was flawless, and often he would act out the parts of the various characters. Once I saw him stand up, lean back against a wall, and assume the role of a stoned hippie dreamily smoking a joint in Los Angeles International Airport. As Reagan told it:

"A pilot walked by, carrying a suitcase. 'Hey, hey,' said the hippie. 'Where're ya goin'?' 'I'm flying to New York,' the pilot answered. The hippie took a long draw on the joint and said, 'Yeah? How high're ya flyin'?' 'Oh, about 35,000 feet,' the pilot replied. The hippie took another draw. Then: 'Yeah? How fast're ya goin'?' 'About 550 miles an hour,' said the pilot.

"'Yeah?' said the hippie. Then"—here Reagan drew again and offered a slow smile—"'Race ya!'"

I always admired the way Nancy bore up during these performances. She had heard and seen them all a thousand times, of course, but as Reagan launched into a story new to his audience she would assume a sort of fixed, anticipatory smile and then, at the punch line, join gently in the laughter.

Critics often assumed that Reagan's penchant for humor—and especially for humor of the good-natured, non-wounding type—was simply evidence of his essential superficiality. But this was no truer of Reagan than it was of Lincoln, another president who loved to tell a joke. Both men used humor to shape and control the emotional tone of the often tense and almost always consequential situations in which they found themselves. Sandburg, in his monumental biography of Lincoln, tells of the president's confrontation with a deputation of senators who called on him to protest vigorously against something or other. In the midst of the argument, which was getting heated, Lincoln strolled up to one of the protesters and inspected his face intently.

"My, senator," Lincoln finally said, "how close you shave!"

Anybody who thinks Lincoln simply wasn't paying attention seriously underestimates Honest Abe.

At a profound level, Reagan's inherently serene disposition and his love of humor resonated deeply with the American people. They too love a good joke, and admire a person who can tell it well. That is just one more reason they loved Ronald Reagan, and will treasure his memory forever. **NR**

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the long view

ROB LONG

ImageBuilders™

New York, NY

June 14, 2004

Dear President Clinton:
Thank you very much for contacting ImageBuilders™ last week. We all certainly enjoyed the chance to meet with you and discuss your concerns about the future of the Clinton legacy.

As you mentioned several times in our meeting, the recent death of Ronald Reagan, America's beloved 40th president, has affected different people in different ways. For most Americans, of course, he was a towering historical figure who brilliantly led our country during a challenging era. To others—and we're referring rather specifically here to the small group of former United States presidents—he's quite simply a tough act to follow. The accolades and testimonials that have followed the news of his death should indeed, in your words, "light a fire under my ass." We here at ImageBuilders™ would like to help you shape your legacy. We'd like to be the fire under your ass.

The reaction to Ronald Reagan's death should indeed crystallize for you some concerns about your own legacy. Although the former president was not a client of ImageBuilders™, we believe that our patented program of image enhancement and legacy creation can, in many ways, simulate a near-authentic close replica of the respect and admiration that he enjoyed.

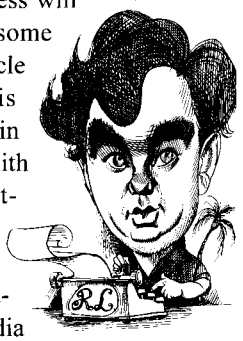
It's never too soon to start thinking about this issue. As it says in our brochure, death can come at the end of a long, happy life, or a few moments after choking on a meatball sub. So if accolades and magazine covers and flags flown at half-staff are important to you, you should consider very strongly becoming a Platinum Plus-level member of the ImageBuilders™ program.

Simply put, the Platinum Plus membership tier offers a highly detailed, 360-degree assessment of your current Legacy Status, along with a multi-point program for improving the tone of the coverage at the time of your death. This assessment takes into consideration current poll standings, the tenor of the most recent newspaper articles, late-night-comic references, and a complex gravitas measurement.

It obviously gives us no pleasure to report that your Current Legacy Status (CLS) index is approximately 7.3, and we look forward to the challenge of getting it closer to 100. (As a point of comparison, President Ronald Reagan enjoyed a CLS of 94.8.) As you mentioned several times in our meeting this week, "If I got hit by a bus tomorrow, would anyone give a f***?" According to our sophisticated metrics, the answer to that question is emphatically no.

And yet, we here at ImageBuilders™ believe that a low CLS is not inevitable. And with a membership at the Platinum Plus level, you'll benefit from our multi-point Move the Needle™ process.

Your personal MTN process will almost certainly involve some kind of what we call the "circle the wagons" phase. In this phase, the client is assisted in the process of reconciling with forgotten, estranged, embittered, and maltreated former friends and allies. In our experience, it is this crucial subgroup that news media professionals and biographers turn to for reactions and recollections upon the client's death. Our initial assessment is that you have 28,544 such figures in your life. (As a point of comparison, President Ronald Reagan had, according to our in-house measurement, 3 such figures.)



In the second phase of your MTN process, what we call "creating the brand," we'll assess your current brand identification—which, according to our initial measurement, is that of a "compulsively chatty," "soft on terrorism," "disorganized" leader given to "ego storms" and "self-abuse"—and work to create a different, stronger brand identity. In the case of former president Jimmy Carter, for instance, our MTN process entailed a 15-year period of silently building houses for the poor. This process was spectacularly successful, and had President Carter been fortunate enough to be crushed to death under a load of drywall, his CLS would have been in the upper 80s. Unfortunately for him, he discontinued the services of ImageBuilders™ several years ago, and his CLS is now in the mid-40s.

Your personal MTN program, along with a "circle the wagons" timeline and a "creating the brand" action plan, will be included in your Platinum Plus Membership Kit, which is contained in your ImageBuilders™ binder. A leatherette carrying case is included.

We look forward to working with you on your ImageBuilders™ process. As mentioned in our literature, we'll begin making a comprehensive CLS assessment and Move the Needle™ multi-point plan when we receive your first retainer check. Enrollment in the Platinum Plus program requires a monthly fee. Please don't delay. Be ready when your day comes.

Sincerely,
The Team at ImageBuilders™

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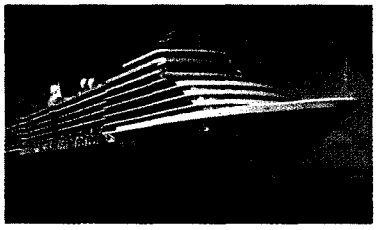

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WED/Nov. 17	Tortola, BVI	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	evening cocktail reception
THURS/Nov. 18	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars late-night smoker
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More Than a Contract

Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good for Gays, Good for Straights, and Good for America, by Jonathan Rauch (Times, 224 pp., $22)

PETER AUGUSTINE LAWLER

RAUCH, one of our most astute and prolific political journalists, attempts to make his case for legalized same-sex marriage by proving that it is both good for marriage as an institution and demanded by our liberal view of justice. All decent Americans are supporters of marriage and of our country's liberal and democratic way of life, and they tend to believe that those two quite basic human goods are perfectly compatible. Like a good lawyer, Rauch plays rather shamelessly on that patriotic prejudice. But his argument actually depends on liberalism's weakening of marriage over time: Now it is weak enough that gays want to be a part of it, and we heterosexual liberals, having lost any sense of marriage's distinctive purpose, are at a loss concerning why we should keep them out.

Mr. Lawler is a professor of government at Berry College in Georgia and a member of the President's Council on Bioethics. His most recent book is *Aliens in America: The Strange Truth About Our Souls.*

Marriage, Rauch observes, "is *the* great civilizing institution." So important is it that he distinguishes himself from most gay-rights advocates by saying that he would do nothing—not even assert his "equal rights"—to "wreck opposite-sex marriage." He carefully uses "wreck" rather than, say, "weaken" or "compromise further." He eventually complains that the policy that keeps homosexuals like himself from marrying is "scaldingly inhumane," so the burden of proof is on its supporters to show that "the cost of lifting" that ban is "certain to be catastrophic." If the result might be short of catastrophic, then equal rights, it turns out, should trump our concern for marriage. Our liberal principles articulated in the Declaration of Independence and embodied in the Constitution—"the country's essential social contract"—for all practical purposes take precedence over all our traditions. Nobody is certain that the legalization of gay marriage will be curtains for the institution as such, and only cruel, rights-denying prejudice keeps us from experimenting with it, as Rauch recommends, on a state-by-state basis. The legal tactic he employs so well is that the key to winning a case is sticking the other guy with the burden of proof. Using the evidence Rauch himself presents, we should resist this seduction.

Marriage surely is not a liberal institution. The Constitution of 1787 is not concerned with it, and that Constitution does not even distinguish between men and women, just as it does not treat human beings as members of races, classes, or religions. We consent to government as individuals or persons, not as men or women. But marriage is between a man and a woman or, if Rauch is right, also between a man and a man and a woman and a woman. It is emphatically not between two de-sexed persons or individuals. Because human beings, in truth, are more than abstract, independent individuals, marriage—with its love, responsibility, and permanence—is possible.

But American marriage, as Rauch explains, has become more liberal or individualistic over time. Women have become more consistently free and equal persons under the law, and not merely dependent spouses. The result has been liberating for individual women, but the divorce rate has soared. Divorce laws have become progressively more permissive, and we now, Rauch contends, find it ridiculous even to connect divorce with shame. Few in the know now believe that all extramarital sexual activity is immoral. Not only are we no longer expected to wait until marriage to have sex (surely gays could have not gotten on the marriage bandwagon until that had become clear), we are more tolerant than ever of married people who habitually fool around on the side. Rauch acknowledges that married gay men will be more permissive than heterosexual married persons when it comes to their spouse's promiscuity, but he adds that today that difference will be merely one of degree, not kind. Most sophisticated Americans, at least, no longer believe that the primary purpose of sex is procreation. Contraceptive sex and abortion, as Rauch notes approvingly, are constitutional rights for both married and unmarried Americans, and people no longer even expect heterosexual couples to have children. There may be more child-obsessed marriages than ever before, but there are also more that are child-free by choice. The old-fashioned view that there are two kinds of sexual activity—moral and immoral—has been replaced by another sexual dichotomy—safe and unsafe. Both homosexual and heterosexual sex can be either safe or unsafe.

Rauch should make us liberal individualists squirm when he notices that there are virtually no legal duties and very few social expectations for married people—at least without children—anymore. But it would make little sense for homosexuals to clamor to get married if there were no longer any significance to marriage at all. With a straight face, Rauch argues that today "marriage is coercive, but in the best possible way, which is to say, the softest. The reward for marrying successfully is approval and respect; the penalty for failing in marriage is sympathetic disappointment." Where's the coercion? It's not coming from the law! And is it the job of the liberal state to accord respect or status

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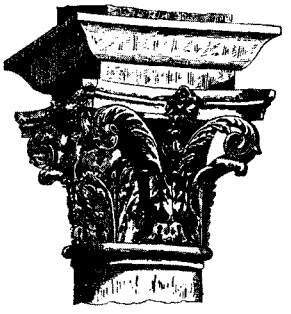
in the absence of clearly defined legal responsibilities? Even the private or social expectations now connected with marriage are very minimal. The divorced—no matter what they did—aren't shamed or shunned; they too deserve sympathy. Rauch comes closer than at first appears to arguing that marriage now is a virtually duty-free web of legal entitlements that should be available to all Americans. If that is what marriage has become, there is, in fact, no reason to exclude homosexuals from its benefits.

But Rauch is too good a man to actually affirm that conclusion. The effects of liberal individualism have, instead, allowed him "to pare marriage to its essential core." The truth is "that marriage is two people's lifelong commitment, recognized by law and by society, to care for each other." Marriage performs the essential function of ensuring that each of us has a reliable caregiver. That need is real, especially in our liberal or rather lonely society, where voluntary caregiving is not adequately honored and is in short supply. Certainly we should remove all legal barriers to homosexual men and women being able to care for each other when they are sick or dying. As Rauch shows, our law and other policies—by privileging the biological family and spouses as caregivers—have sometimes been pointlessly cruel to homosexual friends and lovers. But he does not show that a virtually toothless marriage license would do much—if anything at all—to secure lifelong care for all of us who need it. He stirringly proclaims his belief that same-sex marriage "will close the book on the [gay] culture of libertinism and liberation and replace it with a social compact forged of responsibility." But marriage does not have anywhere near that ennobling an effect on many or most childless heterosexual couples today. Their experience alone suggests that divorce among gays will be rampant.



The bigger problem is that if the essence of marriage is a contract between two caregivers, then essentially marriage has nothing to do with sex at all. Two sisters could certainly get married, or a young man could even marry his mother. A gay man could even marry a woman! It turns out that when we detach marriage from procreation, we end up detaching it from sex altogether. But no married man or woman with children could say that sex is not part of his or her marriage's essence; the shared long-term responsibilities the man and woman share as parents are clearly its result. When we detach sex from its natural end, Rauch rightly concludes, it no longer has anything essential to do with enduring human commitment. But he has not made his case that the liberal state should call such essentially sexless commitment marriage. He has actually given evidence for why liberal principles point to the privatization of all such commitments: Regulation or recognition by the liberal state tends to distort or trivialize all that is noble about human love and friendship.

Rauch's thoughtful and civilized argument has, contrary to its intention, reminded me why marriage—at least under the law in a liberal country—is finally all about children. What makes marriage a necessarily illiberal exception to our liberal principles—what makes it more than a contract between two individuals to be broken at will—is the man and woman's common responsibilities that flow from their sexual love. We know (and Rauch agrees) that it is best even or especially in a free country for almost all children to be raised by their biological parents, and parents should be held accountable for and assisted by the law in doing their duty to their children. Our marriage laws and social expectations no longer reflect these facts as consistently as they should. (Even the very liberal John Locke said that the state should make parents stay together until the children are raised.) But only insofar as they do reflect them do they make much sense. Most Americans, I hope, oppose same-sex marriage not because they want to reduce homosexuals to second-class citizens, but because they think first of what's best for children. The erosion of marriage by liberal principles has been, on balance, good for individuals (and thus good for justice) but bad for children.

Because Rauch refuses to listen to religious arguments about homosexuality and marriage or even those based on natural law, I have ignored those arguments for now in the interest of dialogue. But we Americans do need to think more about the limits of liberal or Lockean principles when it comes to marriage and the family. The more we detach sex from reproduction—and biotechnology may assist us in doing that altogether—the more we must feel homosexuals' pain in being arbitrarily excluded from marriage. It is the pain, after all, of some Americans "doing the best they can to find love and build lives." "Homosexual relationships," Rauch is surely right to predict, "will enjoy increasing social recognition and respect even outside of marriage." And it is possible to imagine a future in which same-sex couples regularly use biotechnological means to produce their own offspring without the need to do what they're not inclined to do, just as it is possible to imagine one in which homosexuality is genetically engineered out of existence. But for now, we're rather grateful that Rauch's own imagination is pretty much confined to childless homosexual marriages between two men. He regards his own inability to procreate as a "mild" but real natural disability that he expects neither government nor technology to overcome. **NR**

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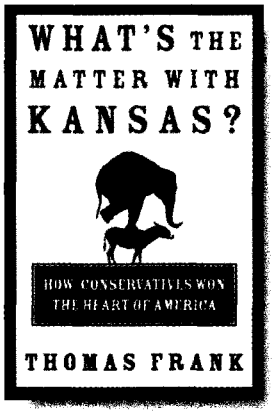
Coup in the Heartland?



What's the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America, by Thomas Frank (Metropolitan, 306 pp., $24)

RICHARD NADLER

We don't find it paradoxical that the sun rises, then sets; or that flowers blossom, then fade. The intervening processes are well understood, so these opposites no longer surprise. But to a mind innocent of astronomy or botany, they might appear paradoxical indeed. In a similar predicament is author Thomas Frank, who asks in his new book: How can ordinary working people support a Republican party hellbent on destroying their livelihoods?

This, he contends, is what is happening in "red state" America, the America of George W. Bush. The capitalist class diverts the just anger of workers from the ills inflicted upon them by the free-market system to "the forgettable skirmishes of the never-ending cultural wars." By this process, workers are tricked into supporting conservative politicians inimical to their class interests. Kansas, that most Republican of states, is his proof and paradigm: Free-market politics has given Kansas huge pockets of poverty, a diminishing tax base, an endangered public-school system, and general working-class insecurity.

Despite these facts, says Frank, Kansas politics has veered radically to the right. Starting in 1991, a grassroots movement of cultural conservatives—focusing on such issues as abortion, creationism, and tax limitation—conquered the GOP and elected such conservatives as Sen. Sam Brownback, state attorney general Phill Kline, and Congressmen Jim Ryun and Todd Tiahrt.

Every aspect of this revolution leaves Frank ablush in amazement. It flies in the face of history, because populist Kansas used to offer reliable support for railroad regulation, farm subsidies, free silver, and abortion-on-demand. It is class treason, because working-class organizers like Kansans for Life's Tim Golba and state Senator Kay O'Connor support free-market policies traditionally associated with the bourgeoisie. Above all, the conservative populists themselves are just plain awful: "Though they speak today in the same aggrieved language of victimization, and though they face the same array of economic forces as their hard-bitten ancestors, today's populists make demands that are precisely the opposite. Tear down the federal farm programs, they cry. Privatize the utilities. Repeal the progressive taxes. All that Kansas asks today is a little help nailing itself to that cross of gold."

This book foists a false consciousness of depression on a prosperous decade.

Fortunately for Kansas, however, its economics and politics are dramatically different from the description of them in this book. First of all, the economy has done well. The state's per capita income increased 19 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars from 1990 to 2002—precisely the era in which Frank says hard economic times sparked the right-wing "backlash." Frank uses tearful anecdotes to describe rural desolation in the state; but these stories reflect particular hardships, not a trend. Kansas, like the rest of America, has been losing farms since the 1890s—but *not* in the recent years of supposed right-wing ascendancy. In 1992, the year Kansas conservatives captured the state's GOP machinery, the Census Bureau reported 63,000 Kansas farms averaging 738 acres. In 2002, there were 63,000 farms averaging 752 acres.

A similar fancifulness informs Frank's analysis of Kansas politics. To the regret of its conservatives, the state's government remains obstinately centrist. At no time during the 1990s, or since, have conservatives captured the governorship or a working majority in the state senate. Republican moderates have generally held the balance of power. During the 1990s, the legislature—thanks to the efforts of a genuine conservative, Phill Kline of Shawnee—managed to cut tax rates. But spending continued to outpace inflation-plus-population-growth. Today, Kansas remains the highest-taxed state in its region, its per capita state levies exceeding those of Colorado, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Nor did the conservatives manage to destroy the progressivity of the state's tax system. Kansas business property taxes remain the highest in the five-state region.

On education, Frank writes: "Ask [conservative] leaders publicly how they feel about the state's public schools, and they will insist they love education as much as the next guy . . . But read the screeds they circulate privately to one another, and their loathing of public education comes out in the open." In fact, the state spending on K-12 education has more than doubled over the past twelve years. If the conservatives really hate public education, they are keeping it a secret from their budgeteers.

Frank's book fails, analytically, largely because of the intellectual weakness of its Marxist worldview. The author describes the "primary contradiction" of backlash politics in Kansas as follows: "It is a working-class movement that has done incalculable, historic harm to working-class people." This harm must be systemic and pervasive, lest the premise dissolve. So Frank has to foist a false consciousness of Kansas economic depression upon a basically prosperous decade—and build upon that imagined

Mr. Nadler, a Republican precinct commiteeman from Overland Park, Kan., is the political director of the Republican Leadership Coalition, a group dedicated to increasing the base of the GOP by promoting conservative ideas.

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ruin a false consciousness of Kansas politics, in which fanciful enemies oppress the virtuous everyman.

In reality, the political and economic situation in Kansas has a much simpler explanation. Ordinary workers shifted to the GOP precisely because it was the Right, not the Left, that secured their interests. The implementation of NAFTA and GATT in the early 1990s constituted a multi-trillion-dollar international tax cut that boosted the export agriculture of the Great Plains, stemming a historic contraction. Simultaneously, the growth of "worker-capitalism"—the accumulation of capital by ordinary workers through 401(k)-type plans—triggered a growing worker appreciation for market-friendly policies and the party identified with them. Workers became more Republican because their material interests became more bourgeois. In George W. Bush's first year as president, market retrenchment, corporate crime, and 9/11 threatened the easy prosperity of the 1990s. But the administration's tax cuts fostered continued productivity growth, with rising personal income and job creation.

Frank opines that social issues—right-to-life, creationism, gun ownership, and religion in the public square—are opiates all: substitutes the Right creates to divert the attention of workers from their eternal class struggle with owners. But today's workers generally *are* owners, both of real estate and of business equity. It is simpler to take conservatives at their word: that God-given rights guarantee all others.

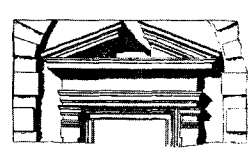
Not all chapters of *What's the Matter with Kansas?* are mendacious. Almost alone among national commentators, Frank presents accurately the controversy over the Kansas Board of Education's "science standards": The Board sought not to ban the teaching of evolution, but to derail its monopoly status in public schools. Nor is the author always ungracious: His personal affection for such grassroots conservatives as Tim Golba and Kay O'Connor is palpable. But his book will probably be most admired by its partisans for what is worst in it—for instance, the lunatic assertions that Sen. Sam Brownback has Nazi connections, or the belittling of the Christian faith of Congressmen Tiahrt and Ryun. And that worst is bad indeed. **NR**

Morning Star

"Borges" & Other Sonnets,
by William Baer
(Truman State University,
75 pp., $14.95)

JEFFREY HART

William Baer now steps forward into the first rank of contemporary American poets. He has gradually become well known among other poets and some critics, and has been widely published in literary magazines; but this new volume, which is lucid and eminently accessible, amounts to a virtuoso performance with the sonnet form, and possesses coherence while treating very important themes. It is bound to win him a wider audience, as well as the professional standing appropriate to this expression of his powers. Keats, only too aware of his approaching death (at 25), said bravely, "I shall be among the English poets." Baer can say, "I am among the American poets."



The sonnet form here, very far from repetitious, uses its regular Shakespearean form, and sequential ABAB quatrain rhyme with final couplet, to concentrate the poetic object in a small space, and give it the tangible form in the mind that material objects have in actual space. Because no achieved poem is exactly the same as any other poem—in form fused with rhythm, texture, emotion, voice, and idea to make a unique object—it gains its own verbal immortality, like Keats's Grecian Urn or Nightingale, both, among other things, symbols of poetry.

Baer's themes consist of the major ones, human love in its variations: Romantic, married, doomed, betrayed, ecstatic, lost, as beautiful as a Raphael or as doomed as in the Inferno. But the Purgatorio in its terraces and Paradiso in its ascending circles are here too. Baer shows he can hit a very long ball.

The great poem "Balcony," which NR published (Aug. 12, 2002), begins with a romantic, indeed luminous, encounter, shaking the heart:

> "Please, just listen, and please don't
> turn around.
> Keep staring at the sea. It's a
> marvellous view
> tonight; the waves are beautiful,
> profound,
> and so seductively close, just like you.
> *I love you.* There, I've said it. I've seen
> it in
> your eyes as well. Forgive me. I can't
> restrain
> myself. Maybe it's seeing you move
> within
> that dress, under the stars, sipping
> champagne. . . ."

But he goes home, and lying awake in bed with his wife, says to himself, "I love you too." Too. We notice how that earlier moment has elevated his language from its touches of banality to, inspired, his achieving the diaphanous and Poundian, "seeing you move within that dress." He has been seduced. He can virtually see her within the dress. But does he love his wife "too," as he says? I think he loves his wife, period; and that the poem knows this, that—no longer on the "balcony," with the woman, the sea, the champagne—he will remember why he married his wife in the first place. But we have to see in the poem just why we think so—if we do. That edge of doubt is part of its power.

Among the works included here are translations. Camoëns—Portuguese explorer, Renaissance love poet, and the author of the fine epic *Lusiads* (everyone would know this epic if Portugal had become a global power)—has a strong

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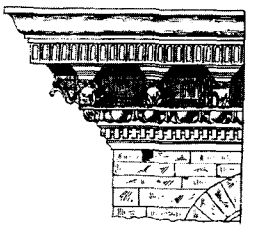
presence, as does the incomparable Borges. Translating a master such as Camoëns can be a challenge:

It's 2001, I've read your poems and
decide
To start with one about love—when
you found
Your Catharina—and though I'm
mystified
By the endless permutations of words
and sound,
I finally lift my pen in frustration,
Rhyming "creation" with
"supplication."

Looked at in the large, this volume moves, though not in Dantean order, from love's many modes, misdirected love (Dante's definition of sin), through purgatorial experiences and self-knowledge, to the Kierkegaardian "purity of heart," willing one thing; from Eros to Agape, through sin, repentance, confession, purgation, and finally the clarity of recognition, as in "Light":

This blazing luminescent shaft of light,
that bedazzles the minds of those who
sit
within the hopeless darkness of their
night,
revealing the passage away from this
festering pit,
leading at last, through grace, through
sacrifice,
to the luminescence of paradise.

The sweep of that single sentence recalls the diminishing burden of sin as one approaches the top of the purgatorial Mount; and this sonnet has reference to John 8:12 ("I am the Light of the world . . ."), the Light that provides the perspective from which it is possible to view the "sweet world" of Dante as a "festering *pit.*" *This is an earned perspective; otherwise* it would be a sterile puritanism. Baer can realize the "sweet world" as well as the pit.



Along the way there is the splendid poem "Swimming Pool," in which a man sees a woman in the water: "Beautiful under the moon, her touchable skin / glows in the moon's first light." She is Raphael's Venus rising from the water. He goes home: "The air is fresh and cool; / his wife is waiting, still damp with the wet of the pool." For that earlier moment, a mind-changing moment, he had seen the world afresh, as a miracle.

In this issue of NR, Baer learns more—now, from Borges—in "The Sea." **NR**

THE SEA

Before our dreams (or terrors) persisted
in mythology and cosmogony,
even before time coined itself in days, there existed,
already, the sea. It *was*. There was always the sea.
But who is the sea? Who is that old, undisciplined,
violent creature, who's gnawing away under
the pillars of the earth, who's also chance and wind,
one and many oceans, and abyss and wonder?
Staring upon the sea, we see it as though
for the first time, sensing the splendor of all free
and elemental things: like afternoons, the glow
of the moon, or a blazing fire. But who is the sea?
And who am I? In time, when my days are passed,
and my final agony's done, I'll know, at last.

—JORGE LUIS BORGES
translated by William Baer

■ MUSIC ■

Blast the Boom Box

THEODORE DALRYMPLE

EXTRAORDINARY how potent cheap music is: and nowadays, one might add, how *ubiquitous and inescapable*, like the political propaganda of totalitarian regimes. You find it even in some bookstores, where you might have supposed that a contemplative silence was absolutely necessary and desirable.

When Noël Coward turned his bon mot, of course, the cheap music to which he referred evoked slushy sentimentality in the otherwise unemotional, but the emotions and psychological states that the new cheap, industrial, and supremely loud rock music evoke are very different, and far from romantic. I suspect that a great deal of the aggressive agitation of modern life is attributable to the unsettling and nerve-jangling nature of pop music, both when it is listened to (or rather heard) voluntarily, from headsets and ghetto-blasters, and when it is piped into the environment like poisonous gas.

In some circumstances, of course, loud music must be a cynical ploy to encourage customers to part with their money faster than they would otherwise do. In the bookstore, for example, the bookworm is discouraged from browsing lengthily before deciding against a purchase. He flees the noise as quickly as he can, clutching a book that he might not have bought if he had been able to read the first ten pages in peace. In clubs and bars, the sheer volume of the noise discourages people from talking, and therefore encourages them to drink more. One day, there is going to be an epidemic of noise-induced deafness as a result of the loudness of bars—which means, of course, that the volume everywhere will

Dr. Dalrymple is a contributing editor of *City Journal*, and a frequent writer for *The* (London) *Spectator*, *The New Criterion*, NATIONAL REVIEW, and other publications.

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have to be turned up even further.

The effect, and in some cases the function, of compulsory or inescapable pop music is to render judgment difficult or impossible. The loud, fast, insistent rhythm induces a trance-like state in which consecutive, constructive, or analytic thought is obliterated. The person in this state is both calm and excited at the same time, and feels a sense of invulnerability. You can see this in the conduct of drivers who play rock music so loudly in their cars that the first you know of their approach is through the vibrations in the ground under your feet. Completely enclosed in a world of their own, they drive as if they were immortal (no one else exists, for them, of course) and a crash were impossible. They are not courting danger, because they do not think that they are at risk. They do not think at all. Their music is a drug of abuse, taken for much the same reasons.

The culture of rock music is coercive and brooks no competitors.

It is possible, of course, that the relationship between recklessness and aggression on one hand, and rock music on the other, is the reverse of what I have suggested: that it is recklessness and aggression that induce people to play rock music loudly, rather than rock music that induces people to become reckless and aggressive. In fact, this question could easily be answered experimentally, for example by observing the effects of loud rock music on subjects in simulated-driving machines. I suspect the effects on performance would be as bad as those of alcohol.

In fact, anecdotal experience suggests that rock music causes aggression, at least in the susceptible. In the prison in which I work there is an officer of Jamaican origin, who would not be culturally predisposed (to put it mildly) to dislike loud rock music, who has discovered by experience that if he plays Baroque music on his prison landing, the behavior of the prisoners improves and the mood is generally calm; if, on the other hand, he plays rock music, the prisoners become agitated and an atmosphere of tension results.

This observation was confirmed by a police sergeant to whom I spoke one night when I was asked to see a patient in police custody. To my surprise, I found the sergeant playing classical music in the police cells, and he told me precisely the same story. If he allowed rock music in the cells, he could expect to be insulted, spat upon, and shouted at. If he played Mozart, all was calm.

I have suggested that Gregorian chant be relayed through the prison, to encourage an atmosphere of contemplation. My suggestion is treated as a joke: Human rights require that each prisoner be allowed his own ghetto-blaster, each played louder than the last in order to obliterate the other's sound, so that progress down a prison corridor is an inferno of discordant noise that induces trembling, anxiety, and agitation. Needless to say, the official solution—on the grounds of human rights—to this problem is the prescription of addictive tranquilizing drugs.

Ironically, I meet in prison men charged with murder or attempted murder who have killed or tried to kill their neighbor because of the loudness and persistence of his music—always rock music, of course. (When a young person tells me that he is interested in music, I have given up asking what kind of music, for the question is by now redundant.) So saturated is our environment with this music—out in my garden the other sunny day, I felt the bass rhythm from a distant, equally bourgeois household coming up through the lawn—that a person who plays it cannot conceive that someone else might not wish to hear it, let alone have a right to silence. Indeed, so closely identified are such people with their rock music that any request that they turn the volume down is experienced as a personal insult, an attack on the very innermost core of their being.

The culture of rock music is coercive and brooks no competitors. It is as if it instinctively understood that subtler, more reflective traditions are a reproach to it—and in this it is quite right. The son of a friend of mine, who attends one of Britain's most exclusive boarding schools and plays the cello, says that he is frightened to take his favorite CDs to school for fear of revealing himself to be a devotee of Bach. The pressure in less elevated social circles to conform to a taste for the supposedly rebellious genre of rock music can only be imagined.

Lest I be accused of mere snobbery, I should add that my target is not popular music in all its manifestations, just because it is popular. One way and another I get to hear quite a lot of Indian popular music, which clearly does not have the brutalizing effect (or intent) of so much of its Anglo-American equivalent. The same is true of African and Latin American popular music, which is vastly superior to, and more civilized than, ours.

Although I am in favor of people's right to smoke, and feel that there should be places and establishments in which they are perfectly free to do so in public, I do not believe that they have a right to pollute the air with their smoke that I have no choice but to breathe, and this would be so even if 99 percent of people smoked. Similarly, I believe that I have a right to a rock-music-free environment, even if 99 percent of people—which heaven forfend—like it and wish never to be without it, the better to suppress their cerebration. It is time to free ourselves from the tyranny of rock music. **NR**

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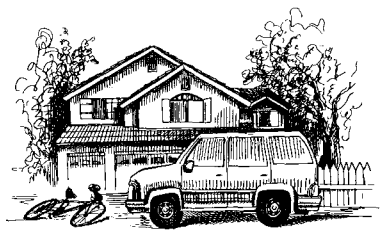
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

Splinter Party



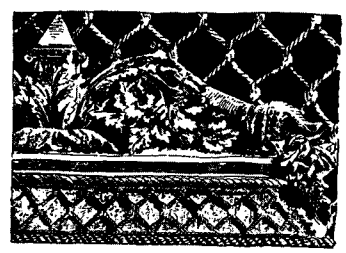
JOHN DERBYSHIRE

MEMORIAL DAY marked the completion of the treehouse project. My eight-year-old son had been asking for a treehouse for at least three years. I had been putting him off by telling him he was too young, an excuse which of course became less tenable with passing time. Concurrently with the dwindling force of this excuse grew the conviction that anything, *anything* that got the lad away from TV and the computer would be worth a little effort and expense. So one day in early April I scrutinized the two larger trees in my back yard, made some rough calculations, picked my tree, and headed for The Home Depot.

Building a treehouse falls into the creative category of human endeavor. There can be no all-purpose detailed plan, no follow-the-book instruction set; trees are too different from one another. The treehouse builder is therefore faced with a small number of general rules that he must apply to a unique tree. There is, for example, the rule that says you may drill a hole right through your tree if necessary. The tree will adapt and survive. However, if you were to drill *two* such holes closer than a couple of feet together, the wood between them would not be able to get nourishment, and would rot. Another rule reminds you that trees move with the wind. If a tree forks into two large boles, the boles will move relative to each other. The movement may be less than a quarter of an inch, but the forces are nonetheless tremendous. If you were to put a bolt through each bole, and fix a piece of wood to the bolts, the movement would rip your wood, or damage the tree, or possibly even shear off your bolts.

My tree is a black maple of the kind found all over the northeastern United States, and south as far as Tennessee. It is perhaps 60 or 70 years old—a fine, sturdy, mature tree with a tough dark-gray bark. Six feet above the ground its trunk bifurcates; eight feet higher still, the south fork bifurcates again. In the crotch of this upper bifurcation I rested, without fixing it, a ten-foot length of two-by-six timber. That was one point of support. For the other, I bolted it to the north fork with a three-quarter-inch steel bolt right through the tree. This single beam, rigidly fixed, yet tolerant of relative movement of the two forks, was the foundation for all that followed.

The particular tree to which the treehouse builder must apply his general principles becomes an object of intense interest, even affection, to him. Working with my tree, I often found myself talking to it. I did not quite reach the point of giving it a name, as Tom Hanks did with his volleyball in *Cast Away*, but I don't think it is too much to say that a relationship developed. I wounded the tree no more than I could help, and carefully treated all wounds with a black viscous substance I bought from a local garden-supplies store, murmuring soothing words as I did so. To simplify my task, and as a matter of cosmetic improvement, I cut off dead branches as I encountered them, and coated the amputation scars with that same protective substance. I don't believe my tree bears any resentment toward me for the disruption of its slow rhythms, or for the burden—five or six hundred pounds of lumber, bolts, and nails—I have placed on it.



Working so closely with a tree, in fact, you develop a respect for trees in general. What wonderful, mysterious things they are! We have been sharing the natural realm with these creatures since the very beginnings of human consciousness, yet they are still as strange to us as, if they had any sentience, we would be to them. One is not surprised to recall the quantity of lore and superstition our remote ancestors attached to trees, much of it gathered up in Sir James George Frazer's vast book named, significantly, *The Golden Bough*. The historian Paul Johnson, who is also a weekend artist, has written somewhere of the great difficulty of painting trees—a thing that, after several decades of trying, he still does not feel he has got right. One of the best known (and most parodied) American poems is titled simply "Trees." Passing from the sublime to the ridiculous, trees have even been the subject of an erotic novel—*A Melon for Ecstasy*, by John Fortune and John Wells—whose hero goes out prowling at night with a brace and bit looking for tender young saplings on which to slake his dendrophiliac lust.

Now our treehouse is complete. As with all works of civil engineering, there are social problems close behind the technical ones. A neighbor does not wish to be overlooked, so that wall of the treehouse was made windowless. Other neighbors are nervous about their kids shinnying up a 14-foot rope ladder, yet are at the same time unwilling to have them left out of the fun. Some concessions to safety have therefore been made. Feminism has marched onto the scene in the person of my daughter, claiming equal treehouse rights for herself and her friends. My son reacts with: "But it was *my idea*." This is perfectly true; and an essential component of a treehouse, in my imagination, has always been a sign saying NO GIRLS ALLOWED!, preferably with the S written the wrong way round. The zeitgeist must be served, however, so some kind of time-sharing arrangement will be worked out.

A cynical friend remarked, when viewing the completed structure: "Kids today don't want this outdoor stuff. The flickering screens are more real to them. They'll go up there a few times, then drift back to their computer games and forget about it." Possibly he is right. We have a splendid treehouse, though, and I have quite taken to it myself. I had my breakfast up there this morning, in the dappled green shade among the leaves and branches and 6 A.M. birdsong. Now I am thinking I may paint a sign of my own: NO KIDS ALLOWED! NR

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Big George at 80

NEW YORK, MAY 28

If you need a tonic, buy, borrow, or steal the current issue of *Forbes FYI*, because you will find there an article by George H. W. Bush. (That's the one who is not now president.) It is published with the title "Executive Privilege," and what it does is tell you what it's like to be 80. Well yes, to be 80 if you are an ex-president. That means you have certain amenities in life not available to all of us. For instance, stepping out of the car one day he reached for the handle, but didn't quite make it. A firm grip steadied him, courtesy of the United States Secret Service.

Mr. Bush has a buoyant way of mentioning joys gone by without exactly repining. He just tells you. "I can no longer fly-fish off the rocks at our house in Kennebunkport. I used to love to go out there and cast chartreuse Clousers at big striped bass or even tiny pollock." So? He can't do that any more, but he can luxuriate in salt water. The only unforgivable part of his life is a twin 225-horsepower Mercury OptiMax outboard. "I love that boat." He comes into the harbor and makes a sharp turn. "Kids love this. This boat makes me feel young and very happy."

Of course there are annoyances, one of them being that he is not as speedy in playing tennis as he once was. And he is shrewd enough to know that some of the serves sent to him aren't as fast as that Mercury OptiMax. The balls aren't aimed at vulnerable parts of his body. "No more real tennis, but I sure miss it."

Surely there is a complaint in this octogenarian, beyond the promise he gave to his wife that he would not jump out of a plane in a parachute again after his 80th-birthday jump? Well, there is the matter of his hearing. That declines at that age, but he has a hearing aid, and it helps when, say, "I am watching a rental from Blockbuster." But there is a disadvantage he can't cope with: ". . . it kills when you are at a cocktail party or even in the office." And there are distortions. "The other day, eating out, I was coasting along pretty well when someone crumpled up some paper a few tables away. It sounded like a low-yield nuke had just gone off." So what do you do about that? Barbara has an approach. "You have the darn thing—just use it."

Moreover, there are certain things you aren't sorry not to hear. "Life is simpler if I don't have to stop in when summoned to that messy room where they hang out to give my views on Madonna, P. Diddy, or Eminem. I have no views on those people. I am happily disconnected from hip-hop, dirty-talking screen performers, and science fiction. I love my grandchildren, all of them. But I no longer want to get their views on Hollywood celebrities or even hear how much they enjoyed the Dave Matthews concert way the hell up near the Canadian border."

His good nature prevails, as it did when he reigned in the White House. But he does have what some would call an obsession, others a mere tic.

Like, the kids using the word "like" all the time. "My beloved teenagers can't say a sentence without saying, 'like.'

"Like, 'Hi, Grandpa, are you like going out in the boat, and if you do will you like take me with you?'" Mr. Bush has an endearing solution for this: "Why don't their teachers tell them to cease and desist?"

There is nothing here at all about foreign policy or domestic policy or politics, and only a single reference to the White House. Life has hard knocks even for ex-presidents. But the perspective of George H. W. Bush is okay. "In the Navy we young pilots all prayed for CAVU: Ceiling and Visibility Unlimited. But, you see, at 80, that is where my life is now. Thanks to my family and my friends, my life is CAVU." And his life, as described in this article, lights up the lives of others.

A Campaign Slogan for Kerry

NEW YORK, JUNE 1

John Kerry has been in search of a line or two of American poetry to suggest the challenge ahead. His staff finally came up with what they were looking for. According to Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "an expert on political messages" quoted by the *New York Times*, the line the Kerry campaign was searching for had to have resonance with Americans who believe the country is being taken in the wrong direction. As Ms. Jamieson analyzes the line, "It suggests someone's hijacked the country, without being a frontal attack."

The line was first tried out by Kerry in Topeka on the 50th anniversary of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, and it seemed to glimmer on the candidate's lips, auguring a robust future. The line is, "Let America be America again."

That phrase has something going for it. It was written by an American Negro poet, Langston Hughes (1902-1967). It is thought, in Kerryland, to be at once celebratory, poignant, and galvanizing.

But research on the phrase is not enjoined for the community that will sing it forth. The reason is that Langston Hughes wrote the poem "Let America Be America Again" in 1938, and it is not easy to summon to mind which America he was calling on his countrymen to restore. There was little about America for the American Negro to celebrate in 1938—unless you are willing to accept the proposition of George Washington Carver. Mr. Carver, scientist and philosopher, the son of a slave, said that American blacks had this to celebrate: that they had been plucked from African forests, brought to America, and baptized into the liberating faith of Christianity, which was the springboard for their emancipation. But Carver is not widely hailed by black Democratic progressives, the judgment on him being that he was too submissive to a culture that still practiced Jim Crow.

Langston Hughes, if he is to emerge as the poet of the Democratic party, will have to be bowdlerized. "Let America be America again" is a line from one poem Hughes wrote, and its vagueness is use-

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ful. But Hughes was not vague. And as for Carver's celebration of Christianity, Hughes was, well, skeptical, as in the poem "Goodbye Christ" (1932):

Listen, Christ,
You did alright in your day,
I reckon—
But that day's gone now.
They ghosted you up a swell
story, too,
Called it Bible—
But it's dead now.

That exegesis of Langston Hughes would puzzle Democratic delegates in Boston in July, vibrant with life and mission. And it wasn't just that Hughes had had a one-night stand with skepticism. No, Hughes had a very specific view about history and on the question of which historical road America should travel:

Goodbye,
Christ Jesus Lord God Jehovah,
Beat it on away from here now.
Make way for a new guy with no
religion at all—
A real guy named
Marx Communist Lenin Peasant
Stalin Worker ME.

Langston Hughes was asking America to "be America again," meaning, not an America that history had known and chronicled, but an America realizable in a new and different vision. The land of Marx and Lenin and Stalin. Mr. Kerry's campaign team is going to have serious homework to do before introducing Langston Hughes as the poet laureate of the Democratic party in 2004.

Reagan: Little Memories

NEW YORK, JUNE 8

Q: You knew him well, right? Even back when he was still a Democrat?

A: Yes. It happened one night. It was his job to introduce me, as the evening's speaker, to a group of California doctors. He acted like a gymnast out of Barnum and Bailey. The control room for the loudspeakers had been left locked. Nobody could find the janitor. So he cat-walked above the traffic to the window of the control room and smashed it open with his elbow, turning on the juice. Nice preview of Reagan, policymaker.

Q: You became friends and stayed friends, right?

A: Right again. He befriended people, as his volume of letters attests, all the time, and kept up with his friends through letters and other communications.

Q: How was it when there was disagreement?

A: It was sometimes vigorous, but never sundering. For instance, he was opposed to ratifying the Panama Canal treaty, and we debated the subject for two hours on television. We punched each other pretty hard. A couple of months later I was scheduled for dinner at his home in Bel Air. He got me on the telephone: "Drive slowly up the drive, real slow." I did—and came upon, every twenty yards, huge hand-drawn signs: "WE BUILT IT." "WE PAID FOR IT." "IT'S OURS!"

Q: Did he offer you a job when he became president?

A: Yes/No. I had written him during the campaign that I didn't want a job. He answered back that he was disappointed: "I've had it in mind to appoint you ambassador to Afghanistan." Big joke, the Soviet Union having just taken over there. But in correspondence thereafter he always referred to me as "Mr. Ambassador," and the week before leaving the White House he wrote to commend me on the Soviet withdrawal—"and you did it," he wrote, "without leaving Kabul for a minute." Good-humored fantasies played long with Ronald Reagan.

Q: Did he ever call you to express any special frustration?

A: Yes. One day, half way through his term of office, he called and said he had seen criticism all his life and understood it, but what he had read just now, printed in the *National Catholic Reporter*, was a bit much, an article by Alden Whitman which said that "President Reagan is bringing fascism to America as certainly as Mussolini did to Italy."

I told him the Catholic bishop in Kansas City was suing the *National Catholic Reporter* to make it remove the word "Catholic" from its logo, since the weekly had no connection with the Church. And I told him that Whitman, who wrote obituaries for the *New York Times*, had taken the Fifth Amendment when asked if he was a member of the Communist party.

He said that information made him feel a whole lot better.

Q: When did you know he was sick? When he announced the Alzheimer's in his public letter?

A: No, I suspected it six months earlier. What happened was that Brent Bozell, my nephew and head of the Media Research Center, came to see me. He said that the public in Washington hadn't really had an opportunity to express their thanks to Reagan for what he had done over eight years as president. He had an idea: to conduct a huge Reagan Rally in RFK Stadium and have it teeming with people. But only Rush Limbaugh could bring that size crowd together.

I called Rush. He came over, thought about it, and said, "It will be great, and I can guarantee you sold-out attendance!"

Though it was to be a surprise event, I needed the okay of Mrs. Reagan, and I called her. I was astonished to hear her say, "Ronnie is simply not up to it." That meant to me that he was truly ailing. In the good old days that would have been simply one more evening's event.

Q: Did you see him when he was sick?

A: No, I never even suggested it. The last time we met was when he did two *Firing Line* programs promoting his autobiography, after which we lunched at his house in Bel Air with Nancy and Ron.

Q: Was he absolutely normal?

A: No. His wit and incisiveness were a little less than par. I attributed this to a little deafness, to which he was gradually accommodating.

Q: Did you have the sense of being in touch?

A: Yes. That was 14 years ago, but he has always been a part of my life and of my political faith.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

"Dietary laws?—are we dealing with some kind of fitness nut up there or what?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

The Joke's on Them

I CAN pinpoint the exact moment I knew the jig was up. It wasn't Reykjavik or the fall of the Wall. It was when Gennadi Gerasimov, spokesman for President Gorbachev, appeared on TV and, seeking to explain the Soviet Union's loosened grip on its Eastern European satellites, inaugurated an all-new Warsaw Pact: "The Brezhnev Doctrine is dead," he declared. "We now have the Sinatra Doctrine: You do it your way."

Mr. Gerasimov was on TV a lot in those days. Plausible, genial, bespoke, tanned, he looked like a White House press spokesman doing a tour of duty in the Kremlin, which was the whole idea. For the "reformers" in Moscow, reform was mostly a matter of style. If they aped the manners of the West, maybe the Politburo could retrench, hold on to what mattered, survive.

So they sent their first and last Western-style spin doctor out before the cameras to do a one-liner about Ronald Reagan's old buddy Frank that could have come straight from the Gipper himself. Dan Quayle responded by noting the continued presence of Soviet troops in Warsaw Pact countries and urged Moscow to remember the Nancy Sinatra Doctrine: "These Boots Are Made for Walking." The Reds couldn't win on this turf. To modify Mrs. Thatcher, Ronald Reagan won the Cold War without a single shot. Just rimshots.

Say what you like about Marxism-Leninism, but it was deadly earnest. In the '40s, the Kremlin issued a directive to the Communist party of Great Britain that "the lower organs of the party must make even greater efforts to penetrate the backward parts of the proletariat"—which, to British ears, sounds like a ribald music-hall joke, as Claud Cockburn (father of Alexander, for any readers of *The Nation* who happen to be reading this) vainly endeavored to point out to Moscow. When the Commies got around to professing—like the ladies in lonely-hearts ads—the importance of a sense of humor, they still failed to understand why they needed one.

There's a Broadway musical on at the moment called *Assassins*, a weak little revue by Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman about the men and women who've tried to kill American presidents, from Lincoln to Reagan. When it comes to the latter, we see John Hinckley at a carnival sideshow pumping bullet after bullet into a cardboard cutout of the president, only to have him bounce back again and again with a

MICHAEL JACOBS/ZUMA

brand-new quip, like some kind of vampiric lounge act you can't drive a stake through—"Whoops, honey, I forgot to duck," "I hope you fellers are Republicans," etc. Eventually, Hinckley's all out of ammo and hurls the gun away in frustration.

I think the authors mean us to see Ronald Reagan as a cardboard quipster: There's no there there—nothing for Hinckley to kill. In fact, you're left with the opposite impression—that the inexhaustible supply of jokes is merely the outer projection of a tremendous underlying strength and resilience. In his big speeches, he talked about the "evil empire." In his gags, he joked about hapless Russians waiting ten years for a plumber's appointment. The Soviet Union was wrong because it was evil. But it would fail because it was inept and sclerotic.

In the hours after Reagan's death, CNN was wall-to-wall with media bigfeet, none of whom voted for him and all of whom spoke of his smile and his twinkle and his "wonderful sense of humor" as if these were things apart from his political philosophy, rather than the external evidence of it. The jokes reflect a cultural confidence that seems obvious—but only with the benefit of hindsight. Younger readers may have difficulty recalling quite how gloomy the pre-Reagan era was. If you think April in Iraq was bad, the entire 1970s was one long quagmire. From faraway Cambodia to just-offshore Grenada, Communism was winning and the West was in retreat. Somehow the lower organs of our nomenklatura had been penetrated by a terrible pessimism: In their guts they didn't expect us to win.

As for Reagan, all the things the defensive chattering classes now tout as evidence of Reagan's irresistible personal charm were assumed back then to be proof that he was a moron who'd blunder us into Armageddon. The bestselling poster of the day showed Ron and Maggie like Rhett and Scarlett in *Gone with the Wind*, locked in each other's arms with a huge mushroom cloud billowing behind them: "She promised to follow him to the end of the earth. He promised to organize it."

Funny. But wrong. And, in the end, the best jokes have a piercing truth to them. In their death-throes, the Soviets thought they could mimic the style—the rhythm, the vernacular, the set-up, the punch—without the substance. Not for the first time, they missed the point of the joke.

Ronald Reagan was the apotheosis of happy warriors. In that spirit, of all the elegant tributes, summations of his life, and reports of his passing, let me cite my very favorite—a headline from an Associated Press story two days after he died: "Government To Close In Honor Of Reagan."

Wow. That's a much better memorial than putting him on the quarter or Mt. Rushmore.

Alas, the federal government was merely taking a day off. But somewhere up there Ronald Reagan is enjoying the joke. **NR**

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